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# NEW STATESMAN

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## Too Long a Sacrifice

When Parliament reassembles on Monday the first debate after the Christmas recess will be on Northern Ireland. It would be a cause for some hope if this could be taken to reflect a new urgency in government thinking in response to the new horrors of this week in the province. Hopeful but hardly realistic. In fact, it is all too likely that many MPs will not have returned from their constituencies for the first day of term and this, not any desire to bring the collective mind of the House to bear on the dead and maimed of South Armagh, seems to have been the major factor in the choice of debate. And yet, surely, some MPs will be sufficiently shaken by the brutality of this week's 16 deaths to demand yet another new start in the seemingly hopeless task of restoring peace and politics to the province.

Mr Merlyn Rees has made it a cornerstone of his policy that he must leave it to the Irish to find the solutions to their problems for themselves, without any interference from the British Government. In the NS we have shown how this policy, particularly during the last six months, has been interpreted by politicians in Ireland, North and South, as one of uncaring drift, and one which has simply encouraged the violent men on both sides to further outrages in the belief that they can murder and bludgeon their way to total victory for their own side. It gives us no pleasure to say 'we told you so' as increasingly perverted sectarian violence rushes to fill the political vacuum. But that is what has caused the murders in South Armagh and that is why they will spread.

The harsh facts are that Mr Rees's policy of non-intervention has now had over a year to work. In that year of supposed ceasefire more people died than in the previous 12 months of a full scale campaign by the Provisional IRA, and there is every reason to suppose that this year will beat the grisly record of last. It is almost impossible to convey the sense of desolation and despair which now envelops most politicians in Northern Ireland. One small parable may carry force for readers of this paper. Last week it was predicted that unemployment in Northern Ireland would probably reach 20 per cent by October. The day the announcement was made a meeting of trade unionists was called in the Newry area. To discuss unemployment? No, to talk about ways and means of simply staying alive.

In this situation the reasons for Mr Rees's despair are obvious enough. But it is hardly enough for him to appear on television, as he did on the night the 10 Protestant linen workers were killed, and say: 'It will escalate. This is the way it will go unless someone in their right senses does something.' The responsibility for doing something still rests with the British Government. It is unrealistic to expect the Ulster politicians, driven ever deeper into their foxholes as tribal warfare takes over, to come up with any constructive suggestions unless Westminster gives a clear, determined and decisive lead.

The NS has for years argued that any such political lead should be directed towards eventual withdrawal of the British presence from Northern Ireland. We have advocated this not because we would abnegate responsibility, or leave the Irish to a bloodbath, but because we think we can predict all too clearly where the present drift is leading. What if there are worse, and more repugnant, mass murders in Northern Ireland, what if there are more bombs in British cities, coming not only from the Provisional IRA but from Protestant extremists? In that case we believe that the public pressure for withdrawal will become irresistible and the Government will be forced to withdraw in brutal haste leaving the two sides in Northern Ireland ranged against each other with no possibility of communication. It's been done before and must not be allowed to happen again.

Instead the Government should make a clear statement of its intent to withdraw, and follow this immediately by summoning a round table conference of all parties to the problem to discuss the future constitution of Northern Ireland. Mr Rees is right in one thing. Someone in their right senses must do something. For MPs that means not only attending the debate on Monday but also making it clear that Parliament, like nature, abhors a vacuum.

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## Spotlight on Politics

**Alan Watkins**

# The Tory Left Lie Low

Mrs Margaret Thatcher has been hard at it all the week. Indeed one can hardly turn on the radio without hearing her strangulating away, whether about an election in 1976 on *The World This Weekend* (she is for it) or about the fluoridation of water on LBC's 'phone-in' (she is for this too, because it is good for children's teeth, or supposed to be, though Mrs Thatcher evidently does not realise what trouble she is letting herself in for. There is no subject, no, not even Jews-and-Arabs, which brings out the green ink brigade in such strength as fluoridation. But to return.) The other event of note was the publication of the Tory Reform Group's pamphlet on unwholesome tendencies and dangerous thoughts in the party. This was written up in the papers as the first blast of the Conservative Left against the monstrous regimen; and, in a way, it was legitimate enough to view it in this fashion; for do not the group's patrons comprehend such luminaries, faded maybe, but luminaries nonetheless, as Mr Robert Carr, recently ennobled, Mr Peter Walker and Mr Nicholas Scott?

The true story is less dramatic but possibly more interesting. The document criticising various aspects of Thatcher rule was almost entirely the work of the reform group's moving spirit, Mr William Shearman. Mr Scott did not look over the words. He did not even know that the wretched thing was being published at all. Similarly with Mr Carr, who was very angry (insomuch as Mr Carr becomes angry about anything) not really about the lack of consultation beforehand but rather because he was not told about publication. And much the same, one assumes, applies to Mr Walker. But who, you may well ask, is Mr Shearman? What is his game? What is he after? As my old friend Cross-bencher used to reply in answer to his own questions: I will tell you.

Mr Shearman is 38, comes from East London, and runs a family firm of builders and builders' merchants. He was educated at Ryde School, Isle of Wight, and Clark's College, Ilford. In the 1966 election he tried to oust Mr Arthur Lewis from West Ham North: vainly but laudably, for any endeavour, however enfeebled, to remove Mr Lewis from the House of Commons must surely command the approbation of all rational men. Anyway Mr Shearman was much influenced by Iain Macleod and, encouraged by him, tried to revive Conservatism in the East End; though to no great effect. All those who know him (and I do not) speak of him in the warmest terms.

It is worth recounting these facts, not perhaps very fascinating in themselves, because the idea has become accepted that the Tory Left was and is run, or at any rate represented, by such smoothly lubricated personages as Lord Boyle, now retired, and Mr Ian Gilmour. So indeed it is: but it has its Shearmans too. This is something that *Daily Telegraph* leader-writers, who derive much innocent amusement from the Jeremy Cardhouses of this world, tend to neglect. As it happens, a *Telegraph* writer had a good deal of fun with Mr Shearman's production of the weekend. He objected specially to the suggestion that the Conservatives should try to direct their appeal to what have come to be called 'minority groups', in particular to immigrants. How ridiculous! What a manifest absurdity, that the Conservatives should try to be nice to black men, thereby imperilling their hold, such as it is, over the working class! Ridiculous and an absurdity it may be: but it was Mrs Thatcher herself who said it in the first place. Mr Shearman was merely cribbing, quite deliberately, the words of the Leader. The moral is perhaps that you cannot afford to be too subtle in political pamphleteering.

The other thing to notice about this slight affair is this. It illustrates that the Conservative Left in Parliament – who, poor deluded souls, still look to Mr William Whitelaw for leadership of a sort – have no very serious complaints against Mrs Thatcher. Mr Edward Heath was much more distasteful to them in the periods immediately before and after the 1970 election. It is significant that the minor rebellions in the lobbies (for instance over British Leyland) have so far been led by the Tory Right. Nor are the reformers discontented with their share of the shadow ministries, notwithstanding the absence of such as Mr Walker and Mr Scott. Is not the hero of the hour Mr Michael Heseltine? He presumably counts as a reformer of some kind or other.

Admittedly the composition of the shadow cabinet can be explained in two opposing ways. On the one hand, Mrs Thatcher was an incoming Leader who did not want to disturb the existing set-up and annoy people for no immediate benefit. Therefore her front bench were more to the left than she would have liked in a perfect world. On the other hand, she had to show clearly who was in control and discharge her immediate political debts, to Mr Airey Neave for example. Therefore in the succeeding months the shadow cabinet would move gradually to the left as the Airey Neaves were gently shed. Inevitably the reformers tend to take the second explanation. Margaret, they say, is all right really because she has no very clearly defined principles. She merely wants to win the election.

In all these discussions about the coming reshuffle the name of Mr Gilmour has become something of a symbol. The odd thing was that he was made shadow Home Secretary in the first place. Not only is he a dogmatic, indeed intolerant, libertarian who owned (and for five years edited) the *Spectator* in those faraway days when it was anticipating the permissive society. More, he was opposed to the elevation of Mrs Thatcher and made little secret of his preference for Mr Whitelaw. Perhaps she retained him at the Home Office to teach him a sharp lesson; for, as Lords Butler and Boyle both discovered, the Home Office, whether real or shadow, is with the Conservatives a nearly impossible job. They have such violent feelings. The Labour Party, by contrast, does not care greatly one way or the other about these matters.

Mr Gilmour, however, differs from most of the other reformers in making evident his disapproval of various aspects to Thatcher rule. From time to time he has muttered – or rather murmured – about resignation. The precise points at issue are not wholly clear. Maybe it is mainly personal. He is a fastidious fellow, and we may safely assume that many of the people with whom he has perforce to consort are not greatly to his taste. However, the latest rumour is that Mr Gilmour may go on to even higher things – to the shadow foreign secretaryship in place of Mr Reginald Maudling.

This is the job that is commonly assumed to be Mr Heath's for the asking. But Mrs Thatcher does not appear to want him any longer. Still less do the Tory reformers. This picture of Mr Heath as a man of good will around whom all persons of moderate opinion should rally is, we should remember, of fairly recent origin: post-1974 in fact, and the creation largely of certain newspapers and of Mr Heath himself. On the Tory Left he is still regarded with suspicion. Besides, he did behave badly towards Mrs Thatcher. It was not so much what he did as the way he did it, or did not do it. A former Conservative minister has an explanation. Having led (in one respect at least) the sheltered life he has, Mr Heath has never mastered the destructive emotion of jealousy. He is madly jealous of Mrs T. This may be so. It will not, however, prevent her from reissuing her invitation if she thinks there is an electoral dividend – say, in the run up to the election. Meanwhile the Tory Left, who want no more of Ted anyway, are lying low.

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Alexander Cockburn*

# Year of the Long March

In the cold, bright January sunlight a businessman stands outside his plant in Oklahoma City and tells me he is '100 per cent for Ronald Reagan'. For him the former movie actor and Governor of California is still a distillation of Republican purity. Reagan will reduce public spending, cut back the bureaucrats, stand up to the Russians. Reagan, he asserts, won't be like Gerald Ford, who keeps tripping over his own feet and changing his mind about everything. Then, without a pause, the businessman slips into a denunciation of Jack Kennedy's sex life, graphically described for him in a recent issue of *Time* magazine. 'Just imagine,' he tells me, 'what they'd have said about Richard Nixon if he'd been caught sharing a girl with gangsters.' It was understood between us who 'they' were: liberals, the East Coast media, Washington – all foes of Nixon and foes of Reagan too.

Back in the motel I study a newspaper profile of this month's popular Democratic candidate – Jimmy Carter, the former Governor of Georgia. It seems that Carter, just like Reagan, is running against Washington and against that pernicious species – the bureaucrats. Carter seems to be keen on a strong military posture, too. What is Carter's appeal to the Democratic pundits? It appears that he is thought capable of 'holding' George Wallace in the Florida primary. Not dealt with is the thought, advanced to me by one journalist from Atlanta, that Carter may hold Wallace because the voters in Florida may have difficulty in telling them apart.

Back in New York the rumour goes round that Hubert Humphrey is being treated by a prominent surgeon for cancer. I ring up the surgeon. Yes, he says, he has heard the rumour. One of his own patients told him it the other day. No, he is not treating Hubert Humphrey for cancer and, furthermore, he thinks the stories are maliciously inspired. Someone in Humphrey's Washington office says that there has been 'a flurry' of stories about Hubert's possible illness. It's all nonsense, of course, and probably the rumours are politically inspired. So who is spreading stories about Hubert, so very damaging to his prospects as a brokered candidate at the Democratic convention in July? Someone says it must be the Kennedy people and leaves it at that.

Political gossip, election year . . . from California comes news that young Governor Jerry Brown is having a sufi choir along to his 'State of California speech'. Could the young ex-Jesuit be a 'new look' Democratic candidate? Maybe not this time, maybe in 1980. Dear God, are we already thinking about 1980? 'Look,' says someone from Harvard, 'I've heard that Moynihan is definitely going to resign from the UN, retreat to Harvard and get drafted from there to run as Senator in New York.' He ruminates. 'Maybe though he'll angle for a vice-presidential shot . . .'

Almost as far as the eye can see stretches the brutal terrain of an American presidential election year; and already streaming across it are the armies of candidates, advisers, speech writers, campaign workers and camp followers. Scouting parties of journalists and pollsters scurry between the various forces, probing for signs of weakness or continued ardour. Participants recite in a sort of numbed yet expectant litany the upcoming landmarks and electoral permutations.

Looming up at the end of February is the New Hampshire primary, in 1968 a scene of triumph for Eugene McCarthy, in 1972 nemesis for Edmund Muskie who was

**Alexander Cockburn, political and press columnist of the* Village Voice, *will in future be writing regularly from America for the* NS.

*'I want to be Prime Minister, of course I do. And 1976 would be a good year for it.'* – Mrs Thatcher

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thought to have cried amid its snows. Ronald Reagan is already there to make his challenge to President Ford. He tells New Hampshire citizens that it's time to 'eyeball' the Russians. At least six Democratic candidates battle it out, each hoping to prove to the platoons of journalists that he is showing 'surprising strength', that his particular pitch is the one most likely to strike a chord in the heart of the American people.

And beyond New Hampshire, the Florida primary, and beyond that the New York primary and beyond that . . . on and on, to the Democratic convention in July. Will, after all the primaries, this convention be a brokered process, with Hubert Humphrey finally emerging from smoke-filled back rooms to hold high his hands to the weary delegates in Madison Square Garden and face his second presidential campaign?

The vista seems endless, but it's not as though campaigning has suddenly started. For the best known candidate of all, President Ford, the race began almost at the moment Richard Nixon's helicopter carried him from the White House lawn towards exile in San Clemente. And how tumultuous have been his political fortunes since then. In the great spring days of the recapture of the *Mayaguez* from the Cambodians he was declared 'almost unbeatable'. Nine months later he had the mortification, after some unlucky tosses, to find himself a butt of ridicule on national television. 'Good evening,' an acclaimed satirist was saying to an audience of millions just before Christmas, 'President Ford's regular weekly accident took place this week in Hartford, Connecticut, where Ford's Lincoln was hit by a Buick . . . When the President got out to see what happened, he tore his jacket sleeve on the door handle, bumped his head, and stuck his thumb in his right eye. Alert Secret Service agents seized the thumb and wrestled it to the ground . . .'

Some of the Democratic candidates have been campaigning long enough too to seem permanent fixtures of the landscape. And already some of these 'dark horses' are to be found only in the form of whited bones on the prairie. What of Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas? What indeed of Sargent Shriver, running mate to McGovern in 1972 and still seeking to capitalise on his relationship to the Kennedy family?

At fairly regular intervals someone will get up and say that all this is madness, that an endurance test is no way to choose a President. And at equally regular intervals someone else – often as not one of the stronger running candidates – will get up and say that this interminable winnowing process is the only way to present the issues to the American people and allow them properly to exercise their responsibilities.

And it's not as though there has been a shortage of national issues for all the candidates to debate and the populace to ponder. In the last 12 months, after all, US citizens have with varying degrees of pain been suffering the effects of the worst recession since the 1930s. They have seen the national rate of unemployment top 9 per cent, heard economic pundits talk about a possible 'domino' collapse of the US banking system. They have seen, with the end of the Vietnam war, the defence budget rise sharply. The role of the CIA in overturning foreign governments and plotting assassinations has been damningly documented, and the excesses of the FBI under the tutelage of the late J. Edgar Hoover so damagingly detailed that an investigative reporter for the *New York Times* can safely ask, though answer in the negative, whether the Bureau was involved in the murder of Martin Luther King.

From this array, two false issues attract immense attention and provoke interminable rhetoric: détente and court-ordered bussing. No candidate with serious aspirations suggests there is too little détente. Everyone calls, with varying degrees of urgency, for vigilance against possible Soviet trickery. Similarly, no presidential candidate will whole-heartedly endorse court-ordered bussing of school children in order to integrate school districts. It is merely a matter of degree of hostility to bussing with the enemy not another candidate but whatever federal judge happens to have ordered bussing in any particular community.

And so the central 'issue' of the campaign, appropriately enough for these tireless armies trudging towards November, comes back to a matter of form, rhetoric and image rather than substance: the struggle against 'bureaucracy', bellowings against 'big government'. The joke, of course, is that the most popular present, though undeclared, contender and in all likelihood ultimate Democratic candidate is likely to be Hubert Humphrey, of all the presidential aspirants, indeed of all American politicians in the post-war era, the man most active in proposing new federal programmes, the man most intimate with the Washington bureaucracy, and indeed the hero of the big government coalition – big labour and big planning. For all the talk about discredited liberal spending, 'New Deal' politics march triumphantly on.

*New York*

**Dev Murarka**

# From Peking with Subtlety

On 13 December Professor Mikhail Kapitsa, head of the Far East Division of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, surprised everybody by announcing on television that in addition to three pilots the Chinese were also holding three border guards prisoner. No one had ever heard of this before. There is much in Sino-Soviet relations which no one hears of till it happens, sometimes not even after it happens.

But if anyone drew the comfortable conclusion from this disclosure that Sino-Soviet relations were worsening they were in for a surprise. Two weeks later, Peking astonished everybody by announcing that China was releasing the Soviet helicoptor crew. The crew had been held in separate solitary confinement, like Anthony Grey, since 14 March 1974. More than that, in announcing the release Peking declared it had verified the Soviet contention that the crew lost their way in bad weather and were not spying. Now it is perfectly true that the Soviet crew have been released in exchange for Chinese prisoners held by the Russians – probably more than three. This neither the Russians nor the Chinese have mentioned. The Russians, because negotiations are still going ahead for the exchange of more Chinese prisoners in return for the remaining three Soviet prisoners; the Chinese, probably because they cannot bring themselves to admit that any of their men had been taken prisoner for violating Soviet territory.

But this exchange of prisoners very likely marks a turning point in Sino-Soviet relations. The exchange of prisoners by itself would not have been exceptional but for two important reasons. One, the timing of the action. Two, the Chinese admission that the Soviet version of the accident is the correct one. The significance of this is not lost on Moscow. The public acceptance by Peking of the Soviet version of the incident is not only unusual but it extends an olive branch of no mean size to Moscow after nearly a decade of bitter physical and ideological conflict which no less a person than the great helmsman Mao Tse-tung himself promised to continue for 1,000, 10,000 years. Is Mao really finished then? We will turn to that later.

As for the timing, it is less than a coincidence that the Chinese should have relented immediately after the visit of President Ford and Dr Henry Kissinger to Peking. Far from being a success, the visit was a miserable flop. Messrs Ford and Kissinger had not only committed the unforgivable sin in Chinese eyes of arriving in Peking politically empty-handed, but they had also sought to use China as a bargaining counter against Moscow. This was all right in 1972 when the Chinese were acting under compulsion. It was not so in 1975 when Mao and Chou were nearing the end of their careers and China herself was in some internal disarray. American recognition Peking already had and it did not need any new window dressing.

It does not matter what conclusions Washington has drawn from this sorry episode; but, according to the Russians, Peking has drawn the appropriate conclusions. One, that intimacy with the West has not provided the Chinese with many goods and in future would provide even less. Two, that the only real Western interest in China was to set her on a collision course with the Soviet Union. Three, that prolonging the dispute with Moscow no longer serves Chinese interests, and a gradual return to normality is advisable. Peking has lost little time in putting the conclusions to the test. With its customary flair it has made a deep bow in the direction of Moscow. And though Moscow suspects

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that for the time being Peking might only be interested in using it as a pressure lever on Washington, it is not unwilling to oblige. But Moscow is even more interested in the intriguing question: who is responsible for this turnabout in Peking, reversing Mao's well-publicised antipathy to the Soviet Union?

Who indeed? While some sort of hypothesis can be made about the identity of the person or persons responsible for this dramatic gesture, the answer is a complicated one. This is because the year-end gesture is only the latest, not the first. The first gesture came long before Ford's visit, with Sino-American relations in rapid decline after the euphoria of Nixon's 1972 Peking visitation. This was when Peking began to de-emphasise the threat to itself from the Soviet Union and instead started magnifying the Soviet threat to Europe and the rest of Asia. Predictably this led to the spectacle of European 'statesmen', in and out of office, falling over themselves in a mad rush to get on board or exploit Peking's rolling anti-Soviet bandwagon. They sadly missed the point of it all.

It is one thing to be magniloquent about the subtlety of the Chinese mind and manners. It is quite another to comprehend it. Russians may not be subtle but they are not fools. They immediately began to perceive that Peking was shifting gear. To say that the Soviet Union no longer posed a threat to China was tantamount to saying indirectly that China had no direct quarrel with the Soviet Union. From the Soviet viewpoint it was a first cautious step in the right direction, and so it seems to be proving.

But to return to the question of who in Peking is responsible for it, only tentative answers can be given. Paradoxically enough, the best conjecture is that Mao himself may have authorised it because of his weakening hold on the party and state machinery. But whether Mao did so or not, certainly the man in control in China today, Ten Hsiaoping, brought back from disgrace – as he was a victim of the cultural revolution – has most to do with it. This is because Soviet experts convincingly argue that Teng was essentially in control of the party machinery before his temporary fall from grace and general secretary of the party when the cultural revolution started – he was 61 then, too old to change his attitudes. And now that he has returned he has brought ideological and party orthodoxy back with him.

One of the essential components of this orthodoxy is Teng's distrust of greater involvement with the West and the corresponding belief in the need for mending fences with the Soviet Union. It is true that immediately after his return from the wilderness Teng was considered to be favourably inclined to the Western connection. But his whole background and events are proving that assumption to be mistaken. While this may cause depression elsewhere, Moscow is welcoming this analysis with rising expectations. The Chinese certainly released some hares in 1975, the Year of the Hare. For Dragons to chase? 1976 is the Year of the Dragon.

*Moscow*

**Corinna Adam**

# An Evening with Mr Powell

The Great Fosters hotel in Egham is rather grand, in a particular small-town way: oak panelling everywhere and a dining hall, the Tithe Barn, which the manager is only too anxious to explain was built in 1552. The perfect setting, in fact, for what should have been a perfectly normal, ultra-English occasion – the annual Rotary Club dinner. Only, of course, it was not a perfectly normal occasion, since the guest speaker was Mr Enoch Powell.

There were members there from Egham and Staines, Ashford and Chertsey – the roll-call of names was like something out a nostalgic Flanders and Swann song about small railway stations. The men talked business and flirted, ever so mildly, with each other's wives; the long tables were covered with wine bottles (wine extra), cigars and cream cake. It was all very relaxed and unhurried – to the irritation of some of the press, who had been told Mr Powell would be speaking at 7.30, and were still sitting disconsolately in the bar at 9 p.m. And we had read the speech, rather to the annoyance of some of the dinner-guests who, spotting the handouts, felt somehow cheated of the surprise that should be in store for them. 'Oh, it *is* all about immigration, then?' And 'It's rather short, isn't it?' It suddenly dawned upon the Rotarians that they were being made use of; and some felt it was 'a bit cynical, really'.

They had some justification in their feeling, since more or less everything Mr Powell was going to say had been leaked ahead of time. He seems a very quick-tempered man. At the beginning he made a brief (and I thought vain) attempt to charm the Rotarians with flattery and his instantly recognisable tight smile; but we were soon back on the old treadmill, with him ranting against the media. 'Some sections of the press have taken the liberty of breaking the embargo on this speech.' (In fact, far the largest coverage that morning was in the staunchly pro-Powellite *Daily Telegraph*, to say nothing of Mr Powell's own pre-recorded and pre-performance TV interviews.) We were blamed yet again for trying to conceal 'facts', of being part of a great conspiracy to prevent free speech; we had made immigration a 'non-subject' and it must become a 'subject' again. But the Rotarians by now were in a pretty jovial mood, and even this familiar way of winning over an audience ('can't believe what you read in the papers') did not seem to have the appeal Mr Powell had hoped. Indeed one middle-aged gentleman near me remarked audibly that he thought it was 'a lot of twaddle', and I am afraid to say a number of lady Rotarians looked distinctly bored. They listened, politely enough, but the old magic did not seem to be there.

Mr Powell today looks distinctly older and more tired than he did a few years ago, although the voice is the same agitated sing-song as ever. Perhaps this explains his paranoia about the media, for it is, after all, nonsense to suggest that his views are not widely covered. He knows the ropes of old, and his speech, pre-released with customary efficiency, was front-page news in almost all the papers and second only to the Ulster massacre on the national news bulletins. He may well be feeling justified in his attack, since his later speech, on devolution, got nothing like the same amount of attention: but that is no excuse for his *ante hoc* inaccuracy. The possibility of an independent Scotland, even though it is a far more likely prospect than a Britain entirely swamped by evil coloured cultures, has never created the same excitement. Perhaps Mr Powell's touch is going. There is even some question, apparently, whether he will be re-adopted in South Down next time.

Anyway, the reason for making a 'political' speech to the Rotarians was that immigration was not a *party*-political subject – not that this precluded him from taking a sideswipe at the previous Conservative Administration, since it was under them, in 1973, that the muddle over immigration figures happened. Of course the difference between 17,000 and 86,000 *is* large, and there are some red faces in Croydon (where the statistics are collated) this week. But what the pro-immigrant bodies chiefly object to is the method used by people like Enoch Powell and Mr Ronald Bell when *they* do their sums. The figures they use are taken from a Home Office document called the International Passenger Survey, which records movements rather than people: i.e. if you enter the country five times, and leave it four times, that should not count as nine different people – but it is used to do so. According to the survey, in 1974 there were 6½ million 'movements' in and out of the

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country, in total. The only way of judging how many of them were made by coloured people is by looking at the country of origin on the cards non-British passport-holders have to fill in. Even then, mistakes are inevitable: the people involved include tourists, students and businessmen as well as immigrants coming here to settle. According to the settlement figures, in 1964 52,840 were admitted; in 1974 24,605 (plus some 14,000 British passport holders from East Africa). At any rate, a far cry from Mr Powell's alarmist talk of 86,000 and rising.

One of the nastiest parts of Mr Powell's speech came when he referred to the dangers of 'natural increase'. 'How,' he asked, 'is a New Commonwealth population born here to be defined?' Between 1969 and 1974 the birthplace of both parents was recorded in registering births; the practice has now been stopped and replaced by a 'glossy production called *Population Trends* . . . Come to think of it', he ad-libbed, 'what a significant fact *that* is, what a charming detail . . .' So that since the local distribution of New Commonwealth births and, equally important, their proportion to total births is not known 'another figure is . . . now concealed'. Again, the implication that somebody, somewhere, is doing a cover-up on purpose. There was bitterness, a kind of sour elderly envy, about the youthfulness of the coloured population. 'Even if immigration were not continuing, it would be many decades before deaths – at present estimated at *no more than 5,000 a year* – draw level with births'.

If Mr Powell had his way, the rights of entry of dependants would be strictly limited – they include, he said on one of his familiar rising notes of horror '*adopted* children'. In fact, the position of dependants is not an easy one. Officially, as a country, we are committed to the European Convention on Human Rights, which includes the right to family life. But getting the correct documents often takes up to three years or more, and a man is usually required to prove he can support his family, and house them.

But in a sense arguing on this defensive level, however necessary, is playing the game by Mr Powell's rules: rules of uncharity if not active cruelty; rules which involve disloyalty, going back on promises; rules which see conspiracies in every corner. It does not help the immigrant cause when the Home Office makes such a stupid mistake, even if they freely (or fairly freely) admit to it.The conspiracy theory is about as convincing as the original Reichstag story. All the likelihood is that it was sheer inefficiency, if only for the fact that many immigration officers positively dislike their clients. Far from entering into a plot to get more coloured people secretly into the country, many of them sympathise with Mr Powell and would like our laws tightened to an almost police-state extent.

But, judging only from the reaction at Egham on Monday night from all those respectable pillars of the community, it does not seem that we are ripe for another period of immigrant phobia: certainly not in Surrey. They took it all very calmly – it is not one of their major interests, after all. In fact they even seemed a bit disappointed. 'I don't know', said one man as we left. '*I*'d hoped he was going to talk about inflation.'

**Roger Opie**

# Nationalising a Bank or Two

The best argument in favour of nationalising the City is that it would serve it right. Indeed, since Labour governments have been in office for very nearly one-half of the 30 post-war years, and since even Mr Heath saw in the City's recent antics 'the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism', one might have expected some action by now.

It is not even as though the City was very popular. It is no doubt invaluable as outdoor relief for unemployed senior ex-civil-servants and unemployable ex-Tory ministers. It is, too, a marvellous pig-trough for hungry and greedy young men, and greedy older men, too. But it is universally scorned and despised by industrialists, both large and small, because it simply fails to do its job. That job is to generate and direct medium- and long-term capital funds into those sectors of the economy which will create exports, investment and faster economic growth. The White Paper *An Approach to Industrial Strategy* lists 12 factors which interlock to hold back economic progress in the UK and includes in that list 'imperfections in the capital market mainly at the medium- and longer-term ends' and 'a capital market which does not give priority to the needs of industry'.

Neither of these is exactly a startling new discovery. The Macmillan Committee of 45 years ago focused on the gap in the facilities provided by the City which prevented small, medium and fast-growing firms from raising long-term capital. And Keynes wrote 40 years ago that 'when the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of the activities of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done'.

Quite so. How to get it better done? Why not nationalise the banks? And how many? And what would we do with them when we owned them? The obvious first targets would be those sleeping giants of the financial system, the clearing banks. The greatest benefit from nationalising them all would be to rationalise them all. Since the only purpose of most bank branches is to try to attract deposits by being more conveniently sited, one National Deposit Bank would need no more than a trifling fraction of the 14,000 or so branches now dotted around our city centres and prosperous suburbs.

What about the loss of competition and variety? What variety? All banks and all branches are open at the same times, and shut at the same times. They are overcrowded at the same times, and empty but under-staffed at the same times. The only variety comes in the designs on the cheque books. And what competition? They all offer the same deposit rates, and change them on the same day. And they all make the same sort of mistakes in our monthly statements.

The City propagandists will of course contend that the abolition of the pursuit of private profit will lead to an immediate and inevitable loss of efficiency. But banking profits having nothing to do with efficiency. They are determined almost entirely by government fiscal and monetary policy The clearing banks' monopoly of the Clearing House and the payments mechanism means that one-third of their balances are on current account and hence interest-free Their profits are thus guaranteed not by efficiency, nor enlarged by greater efficiency but by a monopoly exploitation of the Chancellor's policies.

On the deposits side of banking the argument for nationalisation is final. Any doubts arise on the lending side. Industry – especially risky, fast-growing small and medium sized firms – needs *alternative* sources of finance because risk is a matter of alternative judgments. Thus if we replaced a number of potential lenders by one, we would potentially lose a great benefit in independent sources of finance. This would matter less if we were willing to direc

**Roger Woddis**

# Vorster's View

*(After Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan')*

The South African Broadcasting Corporation's first television service opened this week. Mr Vorster has expressed misgivings, and Dr Albert Hertzog, ultra-Rightist leader, says television will cause 'disastrous spiritual and moral decay'.

In Jo'burg did John Vorster Khan
A state-run polychrome decree,
Where Alf, who leads the Garnett clan
Through ratings measureless to man,
Would flourish on TV.
A million viewers will surround
Their sets that cost six hundred pound
And watch the wooden programmes come and go,
And, having paid their swingeing license fee,
Be free to goggle at the passing show,
A system simple as SABC.

But warning voices fill the air:
The blessed thing could be a curse;
Discussions or a doubtful play
Might lead to spiritual decay,
Or even something worse.
The pros and cons must be weighed up
And all the items costed:
A window on the world? Perhaps,
But all those fine Herstigte chaps
Would rather have it frosted.
A handshake or forbidden kiss,
A bishop's disbelieving stare
Would make them cry, 'Beware! Beware!
That box could deepen white despair!'

If ignorance of truth be bliss,
Then let them see the talking head,
For they on garbled news are fed,
And drink the milk of prejudice.

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finance to some borrowers but deny it to others as part of some National Plan in the manner of the nationalised French banks and their planning. But planning of that sort is dead in this country for some time yet.

If we are not going to plan the economy, we must get fiercer competition, greater efficiency and faster growth from earlier and quicker innovation, from the birth of new firms and the expansion of small and medium-sized firms, and from long-term investment by both. To grow and to compete they must remain independent. For that they must be able to get finance. There are only three sources of funds available to any firm – the capital markets, self-financing out of retained profits and a variety of public and private financial institutions. But the first is closed to all except large, quoted companies, and the second is slow and volatile. We are left with an important need for a variety of lending outlets.

This argument suggests that we ought instead to nationalise only one of the clearers. The danger, however slight, in this is that a hostile press and bigoted City would combine their propaganda to drain funds, at least the large accounts, away from such a bank to the remaining private banks, leaving the 'public bank' with only the small and costly personal accounts. To combat this threat, it might be tempted to fight back by becoming a perfect copy of the remaining private clearers, which would negate the whole purpose of nationalisation. It might be safer to nationalise the lot, and lose the variety.

How serious would this be? We could easily wait and see. We want the new Nationalised Deposit Bank to move quickly and strongly into a new field – cheap medium- and long-term finance for small and medium-sized firms. This would increase, not reduce, the variety of lenders. Only in the traditional lending field of the clearers, that of short-term finance for stock-holding, would the number of potential lenders fall, and that would hardly be disastrous.

The final purpose of nationalising the clearers might be to gain control over them. If only that were necessary! The all-too-sad fact is that we are not dealing with tough independent Victorian capitalists in the clearing banks – these are pale, faceless, conforming conventionalists. Our clearing bankers are so feeble that they always do what they are told. Perhaps less feeble than subtle. Perhaps they foresaw that any trace of rebellion against the Bank of England's hints and suggestions would encourage it to issue its first 'directives' under the 1946 Act; or worse still, if as some believe, such a directive would prove to be *ultra vires*, to encourage the Government to nationalise them.

The strategy then becomes simple. If we want to exercise strategic control over the clearing banks – as a ready source of long-term risk capital, and of cheap short-term finance – we nationalise all six of them and rely on competition with other types of lenders in the City to provide the necessary variety and flexibility. We would then move away at least from an excessive and outmoded reliance on a very imperfect stock market as the only source of borrowed long-term capital (a system that prevails only in the two slowest growing post-war economies in the Western world, those of the US and the UK) towards the system of long-term banking funds that has financed the surging investment and post-war growth of Continental Europe and Japan.

By nationalising only the clearers we can control the direction, the form and the cost of a very large volume of lending. If we nationalise a large merchant bank as well, we also acquire specialised lending expertise. If we then integrate these banks with municipalised building societies, the National Savings Bank and the National Giro we can at last extend cheap, efficient banking services and savings facilities to the whole community.

All that remains is to renationalise the Bank of England, and to instruct it in a new economic philosophy that preaches that 'free market competition' is not the greatest good, but that directed finance and investment can at least help to regenerate British industry.

**Anne Karpf**

# Tenants Own Up

On the face of it, Fairhazel Gardens in West Hampstead seems an unlikely place for a tenant revolution. It's a place of schnitzels and strudels, where tenants are called residents, immigrants are called refugees – and are more likely to be Czech than black. It's an area of rambling Victorian seven-up, seven-downs, and mansion blocks; of Japanese paper lampshades and stripped-pine dressers. In short, an area with apparently no one to gentrify but the gentry.

And yet for the past five years the 118 flats in this area have suffered from property speculation blight, and all that that entails – including rapid neglect and decay, and a bewildering succession of interested developers. But this story has a happy, if unusual ending: last April the flats became the first completely government-sponsored housing cooperative in the country, and the tenants became their own landlords.

Housing cooperatives are in the air – not as castles, but as a practical response to an increasingly chaotic and untenable national housing situation. Next week sees the publication of the report of the government working party set up to advise the Government on how housing cooperatives can be formed. Reg Freeson, Minister for Housing, and long an advocate of co-ops, has already declared his commitment to introduce them as a viable alternative form of tenure.

There are four major cooperative schemes in this country, and a number of new ones are now getting off the ground. All of them have started up in the last four years, and between them they own near on 1,000 properties, in London and Liverpool. Yet there is no one such thing as a co-op: they are as different as differing local situations demand. All they share is a definition: a non-profit-making society which corporately owns a group of houses or flats in which each member occupies a dwelling but does not own it individually. So the rents which are paid in the normal way go off to pay back the cooperative mortgage. The crucial benefit which this gives to a tenant is one denied to him in any other form of tenure except owner-occupying: control.

This control manifests itself in a hundred ways. To the Hampstead tenants of Fairhazel Cooperative, it is security of tenure which is most important: their control gives them a stable tenancy. Betty Farara, a lively 60-year-old who has lived in the same flat with her husband for 18 years, put it like this: 'At our age, we couldn't afford to buy a flat in central London – since my husband had a stroke, I'm the only one that works. And we're not eligible for council accommodation. We feel so much easier in our minds now, we know that we're settled, and not at the mercy of different landlords the whole time.'

To the tenants of Granby Co-op, it is control over the repair and maintenance of their houses which has totally altered the way they live. Situated in Liverpool 8, this is one of the most deprived areas in Britain: the dilapidated terraces of three-up, three-downs, presented up to 1971 a distressing picture of urban decay – ignored by the private landlords, overwhelming to an overburdened city council, and black-listed by the building societies.

Today, Granby Co-op owns 150 houses, and tenant Doreen Abrams has no doubt about the benefits: 'Within three years the standard of living of the average tenant has improved tenfold; within the previous 30 years there was practically no improvement. We've all got a bath now. And you can't imagine what a luxury it is for us, having hot- and cold-water taps. Now, if you put money into your house you don't feel you're pouring it down the drain: as much as you do within your house now, the co-op does outside. And you take more pride in it now, because you own it.' Time and again the members reiterate the virtues of co-operative control of rehabilitation: decisions are relevant to individual needs, not dictated by the edicts of centralised bureaucracy; and tenants are prepared to invest enormous effort themselves because the houses are theirs.

But housing co-ops are not simply about owning houses, however important that might be: they are also pivotal in recreating a bit of that currently over-worked word, 'community'. Doreen Abrams has watched it happen: 'The neighbours used to go out to bingo every night; now they've started taking an interest in the area.' And co-ops have an important contribution to make in a broader perspective, going some way to stop the ever-increasing inflationary spiral in property. As they operate in the 'par value' way, the member who leaves gets

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only as much as he originally put in as capital, and nothing from the increase in value of the property or the amount he has paid in rent while living there. So there is no individual profit from housing, and housing ceases to be a marketable commodity.

But if co-ops are generally proving themselves to be a good thing, why haven't they happened before? The short answer is they have – but mainly in Scandinavia, where they have been central in housing policy since the Twenties. In this country since the first world war, however, we've gone more and more for local authority housing, and this is reflected in widespread ignorance about co-ops, and in the housing legislation itself: until recently it was well-nigh impossible for a true co-op, however adept at picking through loop-holes, to obtain government money.

Things have improved over the past year, though, with two pieces of legislation under the aegis of Reg Freeson. The 1975 Housing Rents and Subsidies Act has enabled local authorities to both initiate purpose-built co-ops, and transfer existing council property to cooperative ownership, without losing central government subsidy. And the 1974 Housing Act made non-council co-ops eligible for government funds in the same way as housing associations are, including provision of revenue deficit grant to make up the difference between costs and fair rents. Yet many tenants' groups are openly sceptical as to the cause of this sudden enthusiasm: could it be, by any chance, connected with severe financial cutbacks, and councils' total breakdown in maintaining their estates? If co-ops are seen as an easy way of off-loading problem estates, or as a cheap option – then it's just not on as far as the tenants are concerned.

There has also been considerable criticism of the working party's main recommendation, already accepted, to set up an advisory committee within the Housing Corporation to promote co-ops. Although most cooperatives would recognise the need for some supportive national body, it is the choice of the Housing Corporation which they question, and with cause. The Housing Corporation was set up in 1964 by the Government to give loans to housing associations for co-ownership schemes: all well and good, but even a member of the working party has admitted to its paternalism, and unsympathetic attitude to tenant involvement, let alone tenant control. It is widely regarded as an excessively bureaucratic and autocratic body, unsuited to promote democratic, grass-roots housing.

Co-ops constantly emphasise the need to keep them small – operating on what has been called the 'amoeba principle' – local, neighbourhood-based, and flexible. What they want by way of a national sponsoring body is a democratically-elected group with representatives from existing co-ops, responsive to this grass-roots movement. They have a strong case. Large-scale doctrines have failed: shouldn't piece-meal pragmatism be given a chance? As tenant Betty Farara says: 'People are finding out for the first time that they've got control; the message has got through – if you participate, what you say has real impact. It has to: because we know it's up to all of us living in the flats to make this thing work.'

David Tereshchuk

# The Bombing in Britain

It is probably one of Merlyn Rees's least pressing worries, as he prepares this coming Monday's statement on Northern Ireland policy, that the IRA campaign in Britain is coming up for its third anniversary. Is he not about to provoke once again the quite terrifying spectacle of mass loyalist wrath in the province itself by referring back their Convention's clear rejection of power-sharing? Surely that is a greater problem than anything on this side of the water? And are Scotland Yard not getting on top of the bombers over here, with successes like the capture of the Balcombe Street gunmen?

The answer is yes, but the brute fact remains that one dramatic death in Britain is politically speaking worth almost any number in Northern Ireland, and the Provisionals' tactics for Britain, when reviewed over the last three years, can give Mr Rees no cause for comfort. The IRA have been responsible for over 200 explosive devices aimed at targets in Britain. Sixty-one people have been killed (three were shot dead, and 58 died in explosions). Over 850 have been injured.

The way that all this destruction has been achieved has varied significantly over the years. It would be a mistake to look for too coherent a pattern or too deliberate a strategy – terrorism and counter-terrorism both naturally consist largely of unplanned responses to one another. But there have been substantial shifts in IRA tactics over here, which if perceived might have tempered some of the wilder adulation recently expressed of the British authorities' response to the campaign.

The clearest development, but not greatly remarked upon, has been a change in the Provisionals' weaponry. To chart the kind of bombs they have chosen to employ since 1973 is to see a falling off in many of their favourites. The car-bomb, the most spectacular element in their armoury and the first type of explosion over here, has fallen out of favour. The letter bomb, which came in great flurries in 1973 and 1974, is now very rare. And even the bag-bomb, once the active service units' most popular device, has shown a considerable decline.

Meanwhile, other weapons generally labelled 'tactical' in the manuals have tended to take their place. The thrown bomb, necessarily a small and fairly light bundle of explosives with a short-fuse, was not seen in Britain (except for one isolated example at Kings Cross Station very early in the campaign) until an upsurge last winter and again in the most recent attacks in London. The refinement of adding shrapnel, in the shape of nuts, bolts, and ball bearings, only came about in Woolwich in late 1974, but has since become a recurring feature. And the small bomb placed under cars (a booby-trap device triggered by moving either the bomb-container or the car, and not to be confused with the car-bomb which is simply a huge travelling bomb itself) saw service briefly in late 1974 when Birmingham magistrates and Denis Howell were targets, but it returned in earnest this last autumn killing Professor Hamilton Fairley and injuring a young solicitor in his Mercedes. Shootings, too, were once rare and then usually just panic reactions to discovery by the police, but there has been a recent upsurge – the gun now seems to have a deliberate and premeditated use in Britain. (The decrease in letter bombs seems to run counter to the broad tendency – they are obviously smaller, 'tactical' weapons. However, they do require men with specialised skills, who, the police believe, are all now behind bars.)

The most obvious reason for these changes is a growing desire on the Provisionals' part to be more 'cost-effective' with their explosive material, to use a chilling phrase of Lt-Col. George Styles, the former head of Army bomb disposal in Belfast. A car-bomb needs a very large amount of explosive since the vehicle's bodywork can often be surprisingly energy-absorbing. It is obviously less wasteful to manufacture smaller devices, and perhaps at the same time maximise their effect by packing them with pieces of metal. It is even better sense for an active service unit to do this if their lines of supply are being interfered with, such as when the police discover big gelignite stores like those in Liverpool and Southampton.

The overall improvement in police work since 1973 – the product mostly of substantially increased cooperation with the RUC and Army Intelligence – has of course had its effect. After the Provisionals realised their mistake in mounting the Old Bailey and Whitehall bombing operation directly from Belfast (the Price sisters and their team were picked up the same day trying to fly out of Heathrow) they kept ahead of the police quite successfully for a time.

They adopted the fairly simple technique of employing British-resident groups of Republicans, stiffening them with specially dispatched men and women experienced in fighting in the six counties – these were allowed to settle into a fairly normal and anonymous life, often with no contact among the Irish community, before going into action. However they were known to the security forces back home, and it was this knowledge which eventually began to catch up on them in late 1974 and 1975, with some notable arrests by the police, and more importantly the arms finds of last year. But if, as some policemen readily recognise, the net effect has been to encourage the IRA to use smaller and more selectively nasty weapons, then there is not all that much cause for rejoicing.

There has also been an element of political thinking behind the changes, apart from simply logistics – indeed the shift to 'tactical' attacks had begun even before the

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big explosive caches were found. The Birmingham bombs in November 1974 were a propaganda disaster for the Provisionals, as they discovered when they considered the effect on their fund-raising in the US. There were naturally other factors operating closer to home in Ireland, but Birmingham played its part in bringing about the Feakle meeting which led to the ceasefire. As the ceasefire continued through the early part of last year (firmly observed, in Britain) it became clear that the Provisionals would not be getting what they, perhaps over-fondly, had expected to get out of dropping their military activity – a declaration of intent by the British to withdraw from Northern Ireland. It was when this sense of alleged betrayal by the British had percolated through to even their most patient (in their terms) members that frustration showed and they started bombing again in London. With this wave they tried to put Birmingham behind them and aim at what they regard as 'Establishment' figures instead of ordinary working class youngsters (the Caterham disco bomb they would class as a military target). They believe attacking rich people en masse, at posh hotels or restaurants, or singly at home, as with Ross McWhirter or Hugh Fraser, will alienate public opinion less and worry the Government more – it also has the not inconsiderable bonus that it won't greatly strain their ordnance supplies.

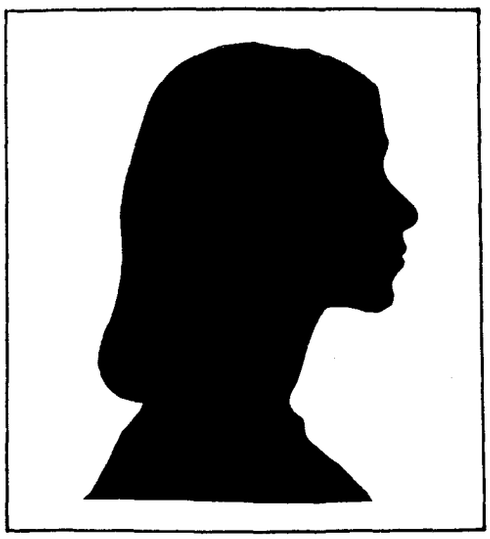
Their new style of operating, determined as it is by both political and logistical considerations, does have one distinct disadvantage for them. The thrown device and the gun both by their nature involve the attacker being on the scene of the crime at the material time, unlike the pre-planted bomb, and they make him naturally much more vulnerable to capture, provided that there is also someone on hand to capture him. As if to demonstrate the truth of that, an IRA unit went back to Scott's restaurant for a second attack, this time armed with guns rather than a bomb. The police were ready for them, and the ensuing chase led to Balcombe Street. The answer to this kind of terrorism, as the police continually reiterate, is increased vigilance, but they also appreciate that this is impossible to maintain indefinitely. The posh night-life areas of Mayfair, Kensington and Chelsea were saturated with extra patrols of 700 officers when the Scott's/Balcombe St operation took place – and this at a time when the Metropolitan Police have fallen 5,500 short of their proper establishment of 26,000. One high-ranking officer at the Yard has privately pointed out that on top of the obvious cost of bringing in extra men normally off-duty there are also the hidden costs of transferring men around the metropolitan divisions; 'How many more regular crimes are being committed elsewhere while we are guarding these special districts?' he asked. Perhaps most disturbing of all, there is no guarantee that the police can successfully identify potential targets for guarding – the IRA could tire of restaurants, clubs and hotels, and try something else.

It is a familiar truism, no less true for being one, which says you cannot stamp out terrorism by picking off terrorists one by one, or even in complete units; and the IRA can always maintain a destructive presence over here if they have the determination to do so. For if the three-year campaign has demonstrated one thing it is how few people are needed to make a considerable impact.

Mr Rees's statement next Monday will probably satisfy very few sides in the Northern Ireland conflict – and probably give the Provisionals least pleasure of all. Their political frustration will grow, and their determination will increase along with it to put extra pressure on the British Government. They will draw encouragement from developments like Gallup polls showing increased support for withdrawal, even though this has not translated itself into a Troops Out movement to match the mass organised protests Britain has seen over nuclear arms or industrial relations legislation.

The future for the British mainland is undoubtedly bleak. There is no sign that the police will find their job getting any easier; IRA violence over here will continue in a constrained but inevitably still bloody manner. We have a long way to go, mercifully, before we can match Northern Ireland's misery, but we are bound to suffer much more; and whether the Northern Ireland Office likes it or not it will ultimately be our suffering which determines the Government's treatment of Northern Ireland.


# ABORTION - it's a woman's right, isn't it?



Who gave her that right? Where does she get it from? Not from the 1967 Abortion Act. That simply removed the criminal penalties for performing an abortion – in certain circumstances. It didn't confer a right to an abortion on the mother.

So what they mean is that abortion **ought** to be a woman's right?

Yes, but that's another matter.

A mother has as much right to kill her unborn child as she has to kill her born one – unless she can prove that the unborn child is morally inferior to the born one and hence disposable.

But she can't. Nobody can. The fact is that feticide is homicide and morally indistinguishable from infanticide, child-destruction and all other forms of homicide.

*And by the way, the unborn child isn't merely part of his mother, despite what the Women's Libbers say. He's not part of her as her hands or heart are – otherwise she would be incomplete before his conception, and after his birth. He's a separate (though not yet separable) person. He's genetically, organically and physiologically distinct.*

*The real difference between a born child and an unborn one is that the latter is unseen, unheard and anonymous, and can't hit back. That's why we do to the unborn things we'd never dream of doing to the born.*

*Women who complain of male oppression should be the last to inflict far worse oppression on another section of the community – the unborn – in the name of 'women's rights'*

Save the Unborn Child

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Life is a non-denominational, non-party-political, anti-abortion organisation. If you would like to help us or want more information, write to:

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Christopher Hitchens

# The State of Spain

*When Goya painted the Bourbon founding fathers, he did an exact and ironic job. Without caricature or distortion, the portraits of Carlos and his family display the characteristics of invincible ignorance and self-regard which visitors to the Prado can still smile at. The present Juan Carlos is more comely than his ancestors, but like his relative Constantine of Greece he has the appearance of a sportive and clean-living bonehead. Also, like his deposed cousin, he is a prisoner of state and political institutions which fear and despise the people they dominate. Increasingly, the people dub him 'Francarlos' in recognition of his real ancestry.*

*No Picassos hang in the Prado: citizens of Madrid will only be able to see them when democracy is restored. But the humble flat of Marcellino Camacho can boast one on its wall – a present from the artist 20 years ago. Apart from that, and the large number of books on political economy, his apartment is like any other in the workers' district. As the leader of Spain's illegal workers commissions he has spent 14 years in prison; the most recent sentence ending a few weeks ago during the very limited amnesty announced by the regime. He now proudly refuses to resume his old job at the British-owned firm of Perkins engineering until certain sacked workers are reinstated. 'And,' he adds, 'I could be re-arrested for having this conversation.'*

*Dr Jaime Cortezo is a respected lawyer and the general secretary of the unauthorised Christian Democratic Party. On 6 November last he attended a meeting, hastily arranged by telephone, where some political lawyers were to brief a foreign journalist. Suddenly the door burst in, and armed men with masks forced all present to lie on the floor and submit to a severe beating. 'Only the police can listen to the phones,' says Cortezo. 'If they are not terrorists themselves, they certainly protect and encourage those who are.' Moreover, the tear-gas bombs and other accoutrements used in the assault were only authorised for police issue.*

According to the laws of aerodynamics, the bumble-bee cannot fly. According to such crude political laws as we possess, the Spanish regime should fall apart. But nothing has really changed in Spain except the consciousness of the population. There have been false dawns before, notably after the climb-down over the Burgos executions in 1970; but Franco's demise has opened a Pandora's box of expectations. The villages of Don Benito and Fregenal de la Serena are agricultural communities close to the Portuguese border. In 1972 there were mass arrests there on charges of illegal association and propaganda. A month ago, after last November's *indulto* (pardon) which Spaniards refer to as the *insulto*, all charges were dropped. Villagers interviewed by the foreign press were jubilant and unabashed. 'Now they must pardon everybody' was the refrain. And after? 'We must have political freedom and political parties'. Amnesty touches almost everybody in Spain, because the demand for it comprises prisoners, exiles, blacklisted workers and dismissed academics. It is simple, obvious and popular: the regime will not grant it. As Camacho said to me, pardons have come several times before (as when, for instance, a Pope dies) but there has been no general amnesty, and liberal ministers have appeared before without inaugurating change. 'Franco could have done all this in 1959,' he says, 'but now you can smell freedom in the streets even if you cannot hold it in your hand.'

Whether or not the Spanish spring will fester and die in the womb or kick and break the waters remains to be seen. Forty years of the prison-house and deaths which can still not be counted have made the Left almost 'stir-happy'; too optimistic at any prospect of concessions. The present cabinet is to Franco what Caetano was to Salazar – a tentative and fumbling effort at a manipulated democracy, which will end up pleasing nobody. Manuel Fraga, the new Minister of the Interior (and former ambassador to London) simply wants to have the opposition where he can see them. As a pragmatist he realises that the ultra-right 'bunker' of extremist clerical, military and fascist groups cannot be allowed to last. But as an old Falangist himself he dare not legalise the communists nor concede to the nationalist renaissance among Basques and Catalans. Men more intelligent than Fraga – which is no extravagant claim – have literally come apart trying to ride these two horses before. The following is an account of how various groups in Spain reckon his chances of success.

For economists, the situation is very grave indeed. Spain is dangerously dependent on the vagaries of the international market, with a threatening recession and a probable 5 per cent unemployment, excluding the million or so driven abroad to stoke the boilers of the Common Market. With the new mood of confidence demonstrated in several strikes, the Spanish worker may not take easily to reduced standards and Spanish business is fed up with being snubbed by the EEC for its fascist connections. Returning migrant workers are unlikely to revert to passivity either.

For left socialists like Dr Tierno Galvan the position is one of opportunity. 'There are perhaps 10,000 people who control capital in this country', he told me, 'and this permits a very broad alliance of white- and blue-collar workers against the oligarchy.' His own Popular Socialist Party is outside the Socialist International and, as he says, 'the new rulers want democracy to save their own class interest; we want it in order to be able to destroy them'.

For the social democrats, the new situation revives memories of their previous power among workers and intellectuals. A member of the central committee of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party), recently released from detention, told me that they thought they could repeat the electoral success of Mario Soares, but would refuse legalisation of their party unless the same rights were extended to everybody else.

For nationalists all talk of reform is meaningless unless Basques and Catalans and Galicians are given back at least the autonomous rights which they could claim before the fascist victory. In Barcelona last week a football victory against Madrid flooded the *Ramblas* with Catalan flags and subversive slogans. An illegal press conference the previous night had announced that a Catalan Assembly and Council could between them now claim the support of almost every political party and social group in the region (or 'nation' as its partisans remind one). All the opposition parties, whether in Madrid or in exile, now recognise the strength of this movement and incorporate its demands into their own programmes. The communists, who are always organisationally ahead of everybody else, even operate under different party names in the three areas concerned.

In the army, there is a cruel and unusual division. One part of it, and the senior part at that, is of course loyal to the bloody traditions of Franco and the aggrandisement of the armed forces that he was always careful to insist upon. Liberal voices at this level – such as Diez Alegria, the former chief of staff dismissed after a visit to Romania – are very muted. Most of the Left prefer not to think about it, but Ruiz Jimenez, a former Franco minister and now Spain's leading limousine liberal, speculated to me that an army intervention could be provoked by any move to grant nationalist demands, any move to precipitate changes in the law, or any attempt to legalise the Communist Party.

The *machismo* of the officer class is very sensitive indeed – in wartime the Spanish army runs away and in peacetime it shoots the troublesome elements in the population. This is why the opposition forces in the machine have to concentrate on what they call 'active neutrality'. At a recent clandestine meeting, spokesmen for the highly illegal and much prosecuted UDM (Military Democratic Union) claimed to have helped stop an army contingency plan to round up opposition leaders after Franco died. They

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also claim 1,000 members, and most of these are obviously young officers with university backgrounds or university wives. Nine of their suspected sympathisers face trial by military court, and it is noticeable that five of them are captains on the general staff, and all of them have impeccable military records – in one case a father who volunteered for Nazi service on the bitter Russian front. Like very many Spaniards, the UDM protests at the sell-out by *el rey cretino* of the defenceless people of the Spanish Sahara. 'We promised these people food and supplies,' said their spokesman, 'but abandoned them to King Hassan.' Juan Carlos may regret this clever betrayal even more than the ones he plans for the future. But for now, the army is the great unknown in Spanish politics. For instance, the five militants executed in November were convicted by a military court but shot by a police firing squad. The general opinion was that the army did not want the odium of the task, but had to fulfil the legal duties laid upon it by the anti-terrorist legislation, which is still being used to fill up the prisons as quickly as they are emptying.

## Bargaining Counters

The liberals and the communists, both of whom need each other desperately and both of whom spend a large portion of the time reassuring each other that they are not as liberal/communist as they are painted, are playing a waiting game. Waiting games are what they are both good at, and they are the best organised forces in Spain. They already have an embryonic political world in which to operate; a world composed of chain-smoking radical professors and journalists, highly motivated members of the professions, self-educated workers and, as everywhere else in Iberia, shoals of eager reformist lawyers. Madrid must be the world capital of opportunism today – with everybody establishing credentials for the morrow. The liberals and Christian Democrats (who have renamed themselves the Democratic Left) use the potential power of communism as a bargaining counter with the regime Ruiz Jimenez was extremely frank about arguing 'If not us, them.'

The communists, too, are able to make their views known through intermediaries. During a recent visit to Paris, the Count of Motrico as Foreign Minister of Spain made a speech in which he said that if Santiago Carrillo wanted his passport back he could apply for it like any other Spaniard, and the fact that he was general secretary of the CP would make no difference to the outcome. On his return Motrico was howled down and pilloried in the 'Parliament', his protestations that he was against legalising the communists going unheard.

In an interview with the Italian leftist paper *Il Manifesto* somes weeks ago, Carrillo spoke of re-opening Communist Party offices in major towns and daring the regime to do anything about it. No more has been heard of this plan since. But the Party does propose to begin work within the government sponsored trade unions, and establish a base from which they can strike when the opportunity presents itself. Camacho and other worker organisers are in disagreement with this plan, preferring to revive the illegal commissions. The difference is an important one, because as Camacho told me, the Portuguese Left began its period of error by insisting on a unified and centralised trade union federation. He did not actually say 'under the control of the Communist Party' but everybody with any experience knows that to be true of Lisbon trade unions, and knows that the behaviour of the Stalinists in Portugal has been a grave embarrassment to their allegedly more liberal Spanish brothers (who received a visit from Alvaro Cunhal in 1968 to tell them that the Kremlin expected more loyalty to the Moscow line over Czechoslovakia). There are other reasons, too, for the communists to bank on a liberal-democratic opening in Spain, and one of these is that the less turbulent the process the less trouble and challenge they can expect from the extreme Left, who put Carillo and others to the trouble of shooting them last time things got out of control under the Republic.

On the extreme Right, there is a period of phoney war. They still have an untried reserve strength which nobody much wants to calculate. It includes the Brigada Politico-Social (BPS) of the security forces, which covers secret police operations. It includes most of the leaders of the Guardia Civil and several leading generals in the army (who had the opportunity to talk to General Pinochet when he became the only head of state to attend Franco's funeral). It includes a certain section of the Church, spoken for chiefly by Bishop Guerra Campos. And it disposes of a scatter of para-military and para-police terrorist groups, who operate with almost total immunity. Fraga was even compelled to make a speech just before Christmas in which he publicly warned the police to stay out of politics. But not one prosecution has been brought against any of these groups, although they have thousands of acts of violence to their credit. The only action ever taken against the fascists was when the *squadristi* of Cruz Iberica made the civil blunder of robbing a bank. Otherwise, the police just fold their arms or put on civilian clothes and join in the fun.

## Potential Violence

In an open election, the extreme Right would certainly be humiliated. And their current strategy is an embarrassment to the Spanish Establishment. Blas Pinar, the head of *Fuerza Nueva* and most prominent rightist spokesman, coined the slogan 'Communists are like barbarians – they always need somebody to open the gate'. This commits him and his friends to denouncing every liberal bishop, every foreign influence and every reformist minister.

So the potential for violence on the Right is ignored by almost everybody, because it would upset everybody's plans. The Left parties in their manifestos do not even go so far as to demand the disbanding of the political police, though the call for amnesty is an empty one otherwise. And the political police are still busy about their tasks – they tortured Ricardo Tellez so badly in Barcelona the other day (for his trade union activities) that he is not expected to recover. And during the curfew and clampdown in the Basque provinces last autumn, they ran a riot of arbitrary arrest, physical brutality and general intimidation. At one point, even the French government had to protest that Spanish policemen were coming over the border as 'hit-men' for Basque political activists living in France. For the so-called 'civilised Right' this kind of activity, with its attendant marching songs, salutes, symbols and slogans is deeply alarming in more than one way. It serves, above all, to remind people what are the real historical origins of this regime, and that is one file which they would rather remained shut.

## The Other Spain

'Few Spaniards' wrote Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia* 'possess the damnable consistency that a modern totalitarian state needs'. So while the Right are puking up the undigested fascism of the last generation, the new-look Establishment ponders the problem of how to be a little bit democratic. Because the appetite for change notoriously increases with the eating, and because the new *galère* have few of the semi-religious beliefs and superstitions about the Spanish 'crusade' which their predecessors displayed, nobody is betting heavily on their chances. The current crew simply exhibit a holy concern for their own skins. (And those, by the way, who keep saying 'look what Franco did for Spain' must now explain why it is that the minute he expired his heirs looked around for the safest and quickest way to dismantle his legacy.)

The leader of the Christian Democrats in Catalonia, Anton Canellas, said to me as we parted that 'three forces lost the Civil War – the working class, the Basques and the Catalans'. His own party was among them, and its leader executed without trial. It does not take a very long memory for that to stick, or any great political acumen to see that the three forces mentioned are now potentially the strongest in Spain, with between them most of the industry, most of the modern ideas, most of the political skill and the support of the best among intellectuals and middle-class dissenters. Basques and Catalans are now 'allowed' to use their own languages again (though not for official purposes) and workers have been 'permitted' to hold open meetings and marches without being truncheoned and shot. But nobody forgets the truth of Eugene V. Debs's remark that the man who can let you out of prison is the man who has the power to put you back again. In their demented fashion the Right wing are perfectly correct. Liberalisation and relaxation *are* the curtain-raisers for more profound and revolutionary changes, and once the Francoist system starts to unravel it will be impossible to prevent those who bore the heat and burden of the day – the other Spain – from claiming what is theirs. 1975 was the centenary of Antonio Machado, who died in wretched exile in 1939. Newspapers recall that he wrote:

Espanolito que vienes
al mundo, te guarde Dios
una de las dos Espanas
ha de colarte el corazon

'Young Spaniard who comes into the world, may God protect you. One of the two Spains will chill your heart'. The Right may find out just as quickly as the Left that there is nothing so bad as a weak king.

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# London Diary

☐ If any minister in the present cabinet has earned his right to a compassionate discharge it is Merlyn Rees. He is dedicated, honourable and conscientious – which makes it all the more of a cruel and unusual punishment for the Prime Minister to insist on his staying where he is. At least before this week's bloodbath, some ideas for a change had been informally mooted. Easily the best plan was (and is) for Rees to be succeeded by a real political heavyweight who could take total command, coordinating the responsibilities at present divided between the Northern Ireland Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office. Of course such a 'supremo' would also need to have an agreed strategy and timetable to work to; but that is precisely the type of thing that a front-rank minister should be able to impose on what, from everything I hear, is a wholly bewildered and baffled cabinet. So much for the sensible solution; the senseless one, which I'm told is also being canvassed, is that Rees should be succeeded by John Silkin, who has been something of a spare tyre in the cabinet since the Community Land Bill got safely through all its stages and became law. As part of the same musical chairs, Fred Mulley might (or so it is hoped) be prevailed upon to go and succeed George Thomson as Britain's second Commissioner in Brussels – thereby allowing Merlyn Rees to take on the job he's always hankered after, Secretary of State for Education. Lovely for everyone – except perhaps Northern Ireland.

☐ Talking of Whitehall demarcation lines, I was intrigued to hear the other day that the Ministry of Defence, and in particular the Navy, are far from happy about the corner they have been painted into by the Foreign Office over the 'cod war'. They had little or no part in formulating the truculent policy that the FO finally went for and resent the burden of carrying it out that inevitably falls on their own Department. Sooner or later there is obviously going to be a very nasty accident off Iceland: naval frigates are not, after all, designed to play bumpety-boats amid the ice-floes. The best denunciation of the sheer folly (and irresponsibility) of British policy came some weeks back from Woodrow Wyatt in the *Sunday Mirror*. I hope Labour MPs, will take a lead from it when Parliament reassembles next week.

☐ Lord Houghton's report on the financing of the political parties is, I hear, likely to be with us in May. What is a bit less encouraging is what I am told about its possible content. Most of the evidence is to the effect that the parties should be allowed to conduct their internal affairs much as at present. I don't myself think this approach will wash. The first point to note is that this is the worst of all possible times to be dishing out taxpayers' money. If, however, funds are to be disbursed, then some element of financial control must accompany it. We have all heard of CLPs which affiliate on much more than their actual membership. Above all, the Houghton Committee should insist that if the parties are to be nationally financed – whatever the actual formula arrived at – then there must be not only an equality of access to them but an equality in what has come to be called the decision-making process. I have no objection to the Exclusive Brethren – provided they themselves pay for their fun. Likewise with our political parties. If they are to receive a public subsidy, then they really must start putting their own house in order, down to ensuring that a total constituency membership rather than just a clique chooses candidates. But I shall be very surprised if Houghton recommends this.

☐ I thought that the political and journalistic world reacted with great calmness and reserve to the news that the bakers (or rather, the three big combines which turn out steam-baked soggy substitutes) have been breaking the law for several years. In a fit of what they claim was absence of mind, the companies were operating no less than 70 practices against the public interest. If, like other countries, we had a proper trust-busting mechanism I would not worry overmuch. But the next step in this case has to be taken by Whitehall bureaucrats who work in an atmosphere permeated by ex-businessmen taking an understanding view of the matter. American executives have been imprisoned for this kind of thing; their defence that they did not know they were breaking the law (or would at any rate stop doing so) was quite rightly overruled. The repetitive outcry against Clay Cross and Shrewsbury from those who say that the rule of law must be upheld either means class justice or it means that the rule of law must be upheld. Do I detect that when it comes to cartels none dare call it conspiracy?

☐ No doubt I ought to have been on Hugh Montefiore's side in the Washington colloquy over Concorde – and intellectually I still am. But, emotionally, I was repelled by the hysterical tone the Bishop adopted and temperamentally found myself a good deal more attracted by the measured, reasoned voice of Gerald Kaufman (who, I was fascinated to see, was billed by the BBC as 'Aerospace Minister' – Son of Tarzan?). For the kind of job he was meant to do, Kaufman was an inspired choice. Years ago a former editor of this paper – and, for that matter, a former British ambassador to Washington – said to me: 'You know, when I talk to Gerald I always feel it's rather like dealing with a bullion broker.' From the respect with which he was treated by Mr William Coleman, the US Secretary of Transportation, I got the feeling that he made much the same impression on him.

☐ The emergency in India has produced a rather fascinating mini-propaganda war with various small groups and pamphleteers contesting each other's views on Mrs Gandhi's recent actions. Easiest to get, and in many ways the most original is an obviously 'official' booklet (issued for free) called 'Democracy Preserved'. There you may read that 'censorship disturbs some people. Others are even more disturbed by the irresponsible, licentious nature of newspaper reporting, both Indian and foreign. To some, freedom of the press is an absolute tenet.' But not, as you will have guessed, to the anonymous author of this effort. If I were Peter Shore, who calls on Mrs Gandhi this week during his trade tour of New Delhi and Calcutta, I should feel bound to tell her the sort of things that the Labour Party and the Socialist International are saying about her. She presumably, after all, forbids herself to read the foreign press?

☐ On Christmas Eve, while bowling along the M3, one of my nightmares actually occurred. Out there in the fast lane came a loud crack – and the windscreen in front of us suddenly looked like something out of a Belfast TV news bulletin. Much inconsiderate hooting accompanied our gingerly progress towards the verge; but only when we were safely anchored did despair really strike. Where at six o'clock on a Christmas Eve was a garage going to be found that wouldn't laugh in our faces even at the thought of doing a makeshift repair? I ought to have known better. True, the next motorway service station (18 chilling miles on) offered virtually every facility except its advertised 'emergency windscreen repairs'. But it did have something else – a telephone number for 'The Mobile Windscreen Replacement Service'. In ten minutes a radio van appeared, so speedily in fact that we missed it by having resorted briefly to the cafeteria for a thawing cup of tea. An hour later, though, it dutifully and uncomplainingly turned up again and its driver seemed positively hurt that we chose a plastic screen and preferred not to wait to have the job done properly. Next time I'm tempted to announce that there's no initiative left anywhere in British business, I must remember to put in a saving clause for 'Windshield Enterprises'. I wish them what they deserve, a prosperous New Year.

**Crucifer**

# This England

**Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.**

☐ A plan to use guard dogs to keep vandals away from a cemetery has been shelved by the council at Stamford, Lincolnshire. 'We would become a laughing stock if we used guard dogs to guard dead people,' said a council spokesman. – *Daily Express* (John Williams)

☐ A slight decrease occurred in the number of civil servants last year, despite large additions to staff in several sectors. It happened because 18,000 officials were transferred to the Manpower Services Commission, whose staff are no longer established civil servants. – *The Times* (John St. John)

☐ After quashing a magistrates' order for a 12-stone Great Dane to be destroyed because it was dangerous, Judge Robert Lymbery yesterday gave it a friendly pat at Bedford Crown Court. The dog bit the judge's hand twice – and the judge was taken to hospital for treatment. – *Financial Times* (Mary Vincent)

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Jeffrey Bernard

# Over and Out

'It's over,' she said. 'You've snapped at me for the last time. As far as I'm concerned, anything there was is finished.' I didn't say a word. For one thing I'd seen it coming and for another I was too tired to protest. I'd already thrown in the towel. I just stood there in the doorway and let her get on with it. 'We can go to the cinema if you like – we can go dutch – but as far as anything else is concerned, it's over.'

She waited for me to say something, but I didn't. I stood there thinking of about six different things at once. The end of the affair concentrates the mind wonderfully. The lurch in my stomach was already dying and like a man watching a pile of crockery falling in slow motion, I'd come to accept the crash even before she turned the door handle. Then she said: 'Aren't you going to say anything?'

I couldn't. I was miles away. The business about going dutch had really got me. I had a vision of us drifting around London going in and out of cinemas and restaurants, and me always saying to the management: 'Look, do you mind if we have separate bills? You see, we don't sleep with each other any more.' As well as that, I was thinking how very hard she was going to be to replace. She still stood staring at me, and her brown eyes were flecked with malice and realistic thinking.

I could have hugged her. I was like the dog that you kick that still gives a few involuntary wags of its tail as it creeps off in to a corner. Of course she's mad, I thought. You might know that strange thought process. It's got nothing to do with arrogance or conceit, it's simply a dull amazement at the fact that someone can't see how truly wonderful you are. There you are, standing right in front of them like the never-to-be-repeated offer of a lifetime, in your prime and only a short climb away from your peak, and the fools can't see it. For a split second I regarded her with the pity I might extend a man who's forgotten to post a winning pools coupon and then she said: 'Well?'

I still couldn't think of anything to say that was going to be memorable enough to haunt her for the rest of her days so I put on my mask of tragedy and went through the usual motions of offering up the late, late prayer. It's one I mutter to myself constantly in betting shops and it goes 'Let's start again. I know I've been a fool, but if this horse wins the last race I promise I'll never have another bet again. Ever. Anyway, not until Saturday.'

So I stood there hoping I looked like something on the lines of the stag at bay, but fearing I was more like a poodle at bay and all the time she was seeping out of the room. By the time she got to be standing on the landing she was probably thinking about whether she'd picked up a parking ticket, and there I was trying to come up with something to keep my options open.

Then she spoke for the last time. 'So, it's goodbye then.' I couldn't even return her goodbye. I stood there and suddenly I saw that picture that I hadn't seen since my schooldays of Napoleon on the deck of the *Bellerophon* saying farewell to Europe, only it was me. Actually, it was more of a post-Charing Cross for me than a post-Waterloo. I was upset – no one likes their sweets to be taken away – but I wasn't heart-broken. There was a pain in my chest that was simply remorse but I wasn't able to summon a tear that would have reflected very well by the light on the landing.

Then she shrugged her mouth and left. As she did so I found myself thinking that it's just like it is in novels. People really do 'turn on their heels' when they go. I watched her go down the stairs and out of sight and then I heard the front door close. I went in to the kitchen and put the kettle on, and as I stood there watching it I heard her nasty, tinny little Renault starting up. I waited for her to crash the gears. She didn't.

It's bloody fantastic, I thought, while I made some tea. After a scene like that she remains so ice cold that for once she doesn't make a mess of the gears. I mean, I ask you, would a man remain so utterly cool after closing such a rhapsodical chapter in his life? Lordy, lord no. He'd drive straight into a wall blinded by tears at a moderately safe 15 miles an hour and she, if she had any heart at all, hearing the crash of a smashed windscreen, would run down the stairs and out into the street deliciously blaming herself.

I took my cup of tea into the sitting room and sat there wondering at my own coolness. I felt strangely ashamed at not being more upset so I put some Mahler on the record player to see if that would provoke the appropriate misery. Nothing. In fact, I sat there listening to the syrup feeling distinctly irritated. She'd be on the phone now, I thought, to an old friend. There's always an old friend lurking in the background, you know. God, how I hate those old friends. Usually it's a terribly reliable, pipe-smoking old friend – who's never laid a finger on the lady in question, of course – and who lectures at some obscure university on Anglo-Saxon pottery, and you can't get much more decent than that, and he's just waiting for your affair to go on the rocks. Up till then he's been hanging around like a non-functioning lighthouse, but as soon as you do go on the rocks he suddenly lights up. Nearly all women have got one of these men they keep for rainy days and these men, damn them, have *always* got enough money to take the ladies out and cheer them up over a very expensive dinner.

They'll be half way through the artichokes at this very minute I thought as Mahler

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moaned in every corner of the room. I could just hear them never mind see them. 'No, actually, I was very fond of him, Bob,' she'd be saying. They've all got reliable names like Bob. 'But it's just that he needs more love than I can possibly give him.' 'I know, darling,' Bob would be saying while at the same time catching the wine waiter's eye, filling a pipe with St Bruno, grinding the pepper mill over madam's artichoke and scribbling a note about a new find of 6th-century cocoa mugs near Winchester.

'Yes, I really was very attached to him,' she'd go on while wiping that delicious mouth of hers with a napkin. 'It's just that I couldn't take any more of his snapping.' 'I know, I know,' Bob would say. 'But you must have known it couldn't last.' They always say that, as though they're bloody fortune tellers. 'I could tell he was trouble from the moment I met him,' Bob would say cleaning the blackboard chalk from under his nails with a toothpick. 'Come on. Have some more wine, old girl,' he'd conclude, putting a horrible, strong, dry, reassuring hand over hers.

The Mahler came to an end and by this time the waiter would have brought Bob the bill and he'd pay for it in new notes plucked from a crocodile-skin wallet. 'What you need, my dear, is a good night's sleep,' he'd be saying while pulling her chair away, helping her on with her coat and brushing breadcrumbs off his lousy, reliable Harris tweed sports jacket. 'I don't know what I'd do without you,' she'd say, being shepherded into a taxi. 'Just try to forget all about him,' Bob would be saying, pressing a crisp pound note into the lovable, cockney taxi driver's hand, and off she'd go valiantly, wiser and happier into the future.

All that happened exactly one year ago. I haven't seen her since, the Mahler's well scratched now and I've licked my wounds clean. Then yesterday she had the cheek to phone me up and ask me did I know of a good plumber? Some people have got no sensitivity whatsoever.

# First Person

**Arthur Marshall**

# Strawberries and Cream

I am happily in a position to help anybody anxious to mug up a novel subject and then cut a dash on *Mastermind*, the TV High IQ Quiz Programme. The subject is non-royal dukes, but first a little of the somewhat thin information available from the dukes themselves. They have in general been far too occupied signing building contracts to put their pens to more literary uses, though the 8th Duke of Argyll did spread himself over 1,000 autobiographical pages. He provided, too, some mind-tingling page headings – Crows and their Habits, Gladstone's Views on Russia, Visit to Leamington, Building a Lighthouse, Fossil Leaves in Mull, Table-turning in Albany (Bishop Wilberforce was caught cheating).

Inspired by this forebear, the 9th Duke of Argyll edited some 18th-century correspondence ('Letters, grave or gay, have always a freshness about them'), unearthed some mysterious domestic accounts ('To Coloured Pigg, 1/6. To a Dutch Crutch, 2/9'), and furnished joyous shouts from the moors at bang-bang time ('The Hills swarm with Roebucks and black Cocks') and helpful advice on gambling and boozing ('The best remedy is marriage'). There are also jokes – a muddled butler proffering a dish with the words 'Grace, your Grouse?' and a sleepy dean mishearing an offer of Benedictine as Benedictus Benedicat and providing a fervent 'Amen'.

Then there was the 1st Duchess of Newcastle who relates that her husband urged her to pawn her clothes in exchange for something for dinner, a different way of life from that of the 8th Duke of Devonshire and his comfortable Victorian existence ('In autumn well-to-do Englishmen, tranquillised by rural pursuits, reassemble in town').

But now to *Mastermind* and a dummy run. The lights lower, the Questioner picks up his sheaf of teasers and moistens the lips.

Q. What is your name?

A. Arthur Marshall.

Q. What is your profession?

A. I am an old-age pensioner and my subject is non-royal dukes.

Q. How many are there?

A. There were 26 at the last count, all of them related to each other in one way or another. There have been several more but as a body they have been regularly pruned by beheadings for high treason. In cases where the victim was publicly hanged, the body was divided up and consolatory portions were distributed to neighbouring towns who missed the main treat. This practice has now been given up.

Q. How do you recognise dukes?

A. Nowadays they look much like anybody else but on solemn occasions you can easily pick them out for they wear coronets sporting eight gold strawberry leaves and the Queen addresses them as 'right trusty and entirely beloved cousins'.

Q. Does she always mean it?

A. Your guess is as good as mine.

Q. Tradition has held them to be, in general, boring. Is this so?

A: Far from it. They have been bizarre, intransigent, selfish, eccentric, hugely self-confident and with strong streaks of both delinquency and lunacy in their veins.

Q. Which has been the dottiest?

A. In a very strong field, pride of place must go to the 5th Duke of Portland who had a bulbous nose supporting two large warts, secured his trouser legs with string, hid behind an opened umbrella when stared at, wore a heavy sable coat in summer and had a choice of 86 wigs. He converted Welbeck Abbey in such a way that most of the rooms, including a ballroom capable of holding 2,000, were underground and required 15 miles of tunnel.

Q. And the runner-up?

A. Difficult to say. The 12th Duke of St Albans, a relatively recent figure, was delightfully unusual; he interrupted preachers with shouts of 'Rubbish!', arrived for visits with his pyjamas in a brown paper bag, hoped to appear at the 1953 coronation accompanied by a live falcon, and refused to be moved from a hotel which had caught fire and was burning merrily: 'Nonsense! Bring me some more toast.'

Q. Whence cometh your knowledge?

A. It cometh partly from my own skilled researches but mainly from the splendidly painstaking and enormously readable and unstuffy endeavours of Brian Masters in his book, *The Dukes*.

Q. Published by?

A. Blond and Briggs, at £6.95, illustrated.

Q. Would you say that on the whole dukes have been a Good Thing or a Bad Thing?

A. A Good Thing. Most of them have had admirable taste in the matter of houses – Boughton, Woburn, Chatsworth, Goodwood. They have assembled superb collections of pictures, porcelain and so on, treasures which they now, for a modest fee, share with us. They have an excellent record as humane employers. Some of them have been perhaps a little mean: the 1st Duke of Marlborough refused to dot his i's in order to save ink.

Q. Are we likely to see any new dukedoms?

A. Improbable. No monarch since Victoria has created one, though a dukedom was allegedly offered to Churchill. Previously it was quite a pastime, Charles II, a grateful king, creating over 20, among them five of his nephews and six bastard sons. At least 13 prime ministers can trace their ancestry back to the lusty union between that supremely charming sovereign and Barbara Villiers, a restless lady who subsequently notched up ten other lovers, her interests ranging widely from Wycherly to a performer on the tight-rope.

Q. What else have you to tell us?

A. Oh goodness, there's just so *much*! The 4th Duke of Queensberry bathed in milk and was bored by the Thames: 'There it goes, flow, flow, flow.' The Buccleuch possessions are greater than those of any private land-owner in either Britain or Europe. The late Duke of Norfolk had a no-nonsense approach to lady dinner guests: 'I have only two topics of conversation – cricket and drains. Choose.' There has been one Double Duchess – Louise who, on the death of Manchester, switched to Devonshire. The Duke of Devonshire owns no land in Devonshire but manages quite well in Derbyshire. For a time the 7th Duke of Leinster ran a tea-shop in Rye.

Q. Er, thank you. Now, do you recall that some years ago while Miss Hermione Gingold was giving of her remarkable best at a matinée, a child in the front row said loudly: 'Mummy, what is that woman *for*?'

A. I do so recall.

Q. What, then, are dukes *for*?

A. Pass.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Devolution and the Labour Party

*Sir*, Further to Eric Heffer's article, (NS 19 December) let me set out once again the nature of the Labour Party's commitment to devolution in Wales. In 1965 the Executive Committee of the Welsh Council of Labour, in considering the future structure of local government in Wales, adopted a policy that local government in Wales should be reorganised on a basis of a single tier of most-purpose local authorities, with an elected council for Wales to act as the top tier and also to serve as a means of bringing under democratic control the large number of appointed and *ad hoc* bodies exercising certain functions of government within Wales, and to provide machinery for devolution of functions from central government as appropriate. This commitment was accepted as party policy in Wales by the annual conference of the Welsh Council of Labour in May 1966.

When the Labour Government set up the Royal Commission on the Constitution, the Welsh Council of Labour prepared evidence to the commission. Its evidence confirmed the policy adopted in 1965, and was agreed in detail with the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and with the Welsh Group of Labour MPs before submission to the commission in January 1970. That document of evidence to the commission remains party policy for Wales to this day.

The Labour Party's national manifesto in June 1970 – 'Now Britain's strong, let's make it great to live in' – contained the following paragraph on Wales:

> The Government has published proposals for a new local authority structure to provide improved local services. The evidence given by the Labour Party to the Commission on the Constitution includes plans for an elected Council for Wales with extended powers. The Labour Party in Wales believes strongly in the integration of the United Kingdom and rejects a policy of separation or a separate Parliament for Wales as being detrimental to the true interests of the Principality.

The Welsh Group of Labour MPs followed party policy on this matter, and during the debates on the Tories' Local Government Bill the shadow Secretary of State for Wales stated on behalf of the Labour Party on 16 March 1972:

> I want Wales to know that the Opposition are 100 per cent in support of this motion which I am proposing to the Committee this morning – that there shall be established from 1 April 1976 an elected council for Wales . . . I say that when the Labour Party is returned to power we shall take steps to introduce an elected Council for Wales. I hope that is clear beyond any representation at all.

'Labour's Programme for Britain 1973' followed the 1972 edition in stating: 'To date the decision has been for unity within the United Kingdom, with a Council for Wales to provide a focus for decision-making in the Principality,' and that document was accepted by party conference in 1973. On 31 October 1973 the reports of the Royal Commission were published. The Welsh Labour Group of MPs examined the reports, and reaffirmed their support for a directly elected Council for Wales with executive powers. A series of area conferences for party members in Wales was convened to consider the Royal Commission's findings, and there was a consensus that the evidence given by the Labour Party to the commission still represented the view of the party.

In the February 1974 election, the Labour Party's manifesto for Wales (and the party has prepared separate manifestos for Wales at least since 1959) contained the following commitment:

> The Labour Party in Wales notes with some satisfaction that the Kilbrandon Report recommends all the most important points that we put forward in our evidence. Accordingly Labour will establish a directly elected Council for Wales with function, power and finance to enable it to be an effective democratic force in the life of Wales.

Following the February election, and the minority Labour Government's publication of a Green Paper, the Welsh Council of Labour held a Special Conference on 22 June 1974 at which it reaffirmed its policy. The NEC decision of 31 July 1974 referred only to Scotland, but the policy statement published on 5 September 1974, 'Bringing Power back to the People', endorsed party policy for Wales as well as for Scotland.

The manifesto commitment for Wales in October 1974 was therefore the culmination of a long series of decisions taken by the party in Wales and at national level. Since that election, party policy on this issue was further endorsed at the annual conference of the Welsh Council of Labour in May 1975, and a resolution calling for a referendum on the question was defeated by a large majority.

J. EMRYS JONES
*Organiser*

*Welsh Office*
*The Labour Party*
*Cardiff*

*Sir*, Devolution has become a major issue in British politics. The Government's handling of it threatens grave damage to the Labour movement in Scotland and Wales and subsequently in Britain as a whole. Throughout there has been a total absence of understanding by the Government of the national democratic and class aspirations involved in the demand for the establishment of Scottish and Welsh parliaments with meaningful powers. Each faltering and grudging concession to the wishes of the Scottish and Welsh peoples has been determined by electoral considerations, not by principle. As a result, the Nationalist parties' electoral advance has been fuelled rather than combated and divisions in the Labour Party deepened. The White Paper 'Our Changing Democracy (Devolution to Scotland and Wales)' carries to a new high point this dangerous process.

Even if right-wing Labour leaders understood the issues involved in finding a correct solution to the national question in Britain, they would still oppose a socialist approach because of their general commitment to the preservation of capitalism in Britain. But we have the right to expect more from Eric Heffer than was offered in his article.

He is correctly concerned that separatist tendencies should not lead to divisions in the British working-class movement and so endanger the prospect of socialism. But refusal to respond to the just national aspirations of the Scottish and Welsh peoples, and continued failure to meet their growing determination that years of neglect should be ended, is the surest recipe for *increasing* that danger. The way to strengthen the unity of the English, Scottish and Welsh labour movements is by strengthening the voluntary cooperation of our three peoples on a democratic basis and by giving due weight to the national needs and hopes of each.

Let us hope that Eric Heffer and others on


About Oxford Books

## African patriot

Moshoeshoe of Lesotho was born about 1785 and died in 1870. His life extended from the old order to the new – the traditional to the colonial. He was brought up in the interior of Southern Africa in an isolated society of mixed farmers, organised in small chiefdoms. As a young man he knew nothing of horses, of firearms, or of white people. During his thirties, Africans who had been displaced from Natal by Shaka invaded his homeland and triggered a series of catastrophes that caused bloodshed, social and political disintegration, and collapse of confidence. It was then that Moshoeshoe emerged as a leader. Through moral influence as much as military prowess, he rallied the survivors and built a kingdom. For the rest of his life he struggled to preserve for his people as much territory, social cohesion, and political autonomy as he could in the face of White expansion. The modern state of Lesotho, independent again since 1966 after nearly a century of British over-rule, is his legacy. **Survival in Two Worlds,** by Leonard Thompson, published yesterday at £9.50, is a convincing portrait of a humane and intelligent man and a skilful and far-sighted patriot. It makes fascinating reading for all who wish to understand the historical background of the Third World.

## Russian poet

The career of Aleksandr Blok (1889-1921) reached its peak with the writing of *The Twelve* in 1918. It was the first great poem of the Russian Revolution and towers above all others in a period that produced many important poets. It has been considered as the watershed separating pre-Revolutionary from Soviet Russian literature, yet despite its importance and complexity there has been no full length study of it in any language other than Russian. **The Poet and the Revolution** by Sergei Hackel, £10.50, fills this gap, setting the poem in its literary, biographical, and historical context.

## Food facts

Why do we have to eat? What are vitamins, amino acids, proteins; where do we get them, and what good do they do us? How were they discovered, and how did people survive beforehand? Can man live on fish and chips alone? Do the Russians make artificial caviare? These are just a few of the questions answered by Arnold Bender in **The Facts of Food** (£3.50 paper covers £1.50) a succinct and fascinating survey of nutrition which will also tell you about what we need to eat and how much, about food fashions and taboos, about natural foods and chemical additives, about obesity and heart disease, about food labelling and the law, and about the contribution that the science of nutrition can make towards easing the problems of feeding the world's growing population.


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the Left will drop the proposal for referenda in the three countries of Britain, which can only make a bad situation worse, and advocate:

> Assembly elections at the earliest possible moment in Scotland and Wales, conducted on the basis of proportional representation.
>
> These Assemblies to have sufficient legislative powers and finance to tackle effectively the grim economic and social conditions in both countries.
>
> Similar consequential arrangements for England.

Devolution in itself will not solve the fundamental problems facing the people of Scotland, England and Wales. What is needed, in addition, are policies by the Labour Government to solve capitalism's crisis as we and the Left advocate. But devolution is correct in principle and is the best means to tackle some existing problems from a national and democratic point of view. A correct and clear position now on devolution is vital to the fight to win left majorities and policies in both the Assemblies when they are set up, and in the Westminster Parliament too.

GORDON MCLENNAN
*General Secretary*
*The Communist Party of Great Britain*
*16 King Street*
*London WC2*

*Sir*, Eric Heffer wants a referendum of the whole of the UK on devolution with questions suitably adapted for each country. The Scottish version of the first question reads:

> Do you wish Scotland to remain part of the UK, sharing in decision-making for the whole of the UK within one British Parliament, while having a separate Parliament to deal with Scottish problems?

I suggest that the English adaptation should read as follows:

> Do you wish England to remain part of the UK, sharing in decision-making for the whole of the UK within a British Parliament sited in Edinburgh, with Englishmen outnumbered nine to one, while having a separate Parliament to deal with English problems?

No free-born Englishman would entertain this proposition for one minute yet the Scots have tolerated just such a form of government for a very long time. There will always be discontent until the countries of this island have equal national status and self-respect. Social democracy will never come about in a defunct imperial Britain, but it could be achieved by Scotland and Wales; then England might follow their more enlightened example.

JOHN CLARK
*28 Craiglockhart Drive South*
*Edinburgh*

## The Year of Lysistrata

*Sir*, At 70 years of age I am old enough to have had some small experience of the period before women were enfranchised. I retain vivid memories of attacks on the suffragette movement, understandably from male chauvinist pigs, but also, alas, from female chattelist sows. Today it is these same sows who are responsible for the snail's pace at which women's liberation proceeds.

Many women, like Dr Mia Pringle, believe that neglect of children can be avoided only by mothers staying at home to look after them. Notwithstanding vicious telly sketches ('Which one is your mother?' 'I don't know' – Ludovic Kennedy's programme) we need crêches, nursery schools, sufficient maternity leave, adequate child allowances. We cannot hope to get these while so many women are content to be relegated to a dependent role.

Indignation and propaganda are wrongly directed at the male sex. The male chauvinist pig is not nearly so serious a brake to reaching the goal of equality of the sexes as the female chattelist sow.

PAULINE EPSTEIN
*104 Wythenshawe Road*
*Manchester*

## Feckless Consumers

*Sir*, I detect the start of an orchestrated campaign, in your own and other papers, to protect the non-payers of their electricity bills from the consequences – that is, disconnection. Unlike Paul Johnson (London Diary 26 December) I hope (though without much confidence) that the Government does *not* interfere with the electricity boards' policy of cutting off further supply to non-payers, and emotive drivel about people 'freezing to death' does not persuade me to consent to my own payments – and for taxes – being still further inflated so as to subsidise my feckless fellow consumers.

The proper agency for dealing with genuine hardship is the Department of Health and Social Security, not – as Wedgwood Benn and Johnson seem to be suggesting – the regional gas and electricity boards.

NORMAN BOOTH
*2 Bramble Drive*
*Sneyd Park*
*Bristol*

## Who's Who?

*Sir*, Your correspondent, Juan Gomez Figueras (Letters 12 December), rightly asks of Lord Gardiner whether the inhabitants of, and prisoners in, Northern Ireland are Irish or British. There can be only two answers: such inhabitants and prisoners are either Irish and British (much as Lord Gardiner, I believe, is English and British) or they are Irish but not British. They cannot be just 'British' because that title denotes a subject, not a nationality. The inhabitants of Northern Ireland are, like the inhabitants of England, British *subjects* and *citizens* of the United Kingdom; and that, I have reason to believe, is the status of Lord Gardiner.

When Lord Gardiner writes about 'Britain' I do not, like Señor Figueras, know what he has in mind because that term has no standing in law, although it is sometimes loosely used to refer to the United Kingdom, much as people sometimes refer to the United States as 'America'. However, what the United Kingdom is now some of us are beginning to wonder. And with the coming debate (or, more likely, barrage of insults) on devolution and Scottish independence, some of us will wonder more.

W. A. MILLER
*Department of Philosophy*
*University of Khartoum*

## Useful Usage

*Sir*, The words 'youngster', 'jokester', 'gamester', 'songster' etc. reveal an existing, well-tried, single-syllable stem ending in English meaning 'one who does' which has no sexual connotations and which lends itself readily to many elegant and workable extensions such as 'chairster', 'spokester' and of course 'Statester'. In view of the new act forbidding discrimination on the grounds of sex, may I recommend these to you and your fellow editors in preference to the forms 'chairperson', 'spokesperson' etc., much in evidence recently, which seem to me to be inelegant abominations?

ALAN WAKEMAN
*20 Denman Street*
*London W1*

## Dangerous Word

*Sir*, Suddenly, everyone is talking about 'geopolitics'. The term has long been popular with academics, but when Paul Johnson succumbs (London Diary 2 January) things are getting serious.

The word is pure humbug. It first appeared around the turn of the century, and was a characteristically 19th-century attempt to bring determinism and evolution into politics. Another bummer of the same vintage was, 'the biological necessity of war'. Until 30 years ago geopolitics was associated solely with the pan-German movement and the Nazis, who used it to give an air of learning and impartiality to their racism and imperialism. It could be made to mean almost anything: Professor Haushofer's famous *Institut für Geopolitik* in Munich used to argue, in the name of geopolitics, that a Berlin-Tokyo axis was an essential adjunct to Aryan culture.

In short, it was simply a word for politics for people who felt politics was beneath them. Politics was for men; geopolitics for supermen. Which is doubtless why the term is so popular with academics today.

CHRIS JONES
*47 Blomfield Road*
*London W9*

## Public Lending Right

*Sir*, Some of the comments, as reported by the *New Review*, that were published in your two pages on PLR (NS 19 December) seem to rest on rumour or surmise about the Government's intentions. May we record the facts? PLR will be introduced as 'a new right', not a branch of copyright. The funds from which libraries buy books will not be touched. There will be no charge for borrowing. The authors will be paid directly by a government-funded agency, which will also pay all capital, labour and administration costs.

For ourselves, we must disown the claim to have 'actually worked computer data machines'. (Are they part of computer dating?) What we spoke of were data capture machines – which will, as WAG originally suggested, record the identities of books loaned from (or held in reference stock in) a sample of libraries.

MAUREEN DUFFY
BRIGID BROPHY
*Writers Action Group*
*3/185 Old Brompton Road, SW5*

## No Salvage Operation

*Sir*, 'Relatively early... thin enough in all conscience... two-and-a-half memorable tunes ... still rescuable ... arguable pointlessness of the whole operation.' Your reviewer's comments (NS 26 December) on Covent Garden's *L'elisir d'amore* astonish me. *Rescuable*? Is he unaware that in most countries this opera has been a repertory piece ever since it was written and is regarded by many as Donizetti's masterpiece? Obviously Mr Northcott is free to disagree with the general verdict, but in the interests of truth he should not treat the revival as an exhumation of some forgotten work.

JULIAN BUDDEN
*Chief Producer, Opera*
*BBC*
*156 Great Portland Street*
*London WC1*

## Arthur's Seat

*Sir*, The delightful difference between your late contributor, Auberon Waugh, and his replacement, Arthur Marshall, is that the latter *knows*.

ERIC HISCOCK
*26 Chesterfield House*
*South Audley Street W1*

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# BOOKS & ARTS

Russell Davies

# Coughin' Better Tonight

**George Formby** by JOHN FISHER *Woburn Press* £2.95 and *Futura* 95p
**The Max Miller Blue Book** compiled by BARRY TOOK *Robson Books* 95p
**The Fool on the Hill: An Autobiography** by MAX WALL *Quartet* £4.95

Appearing before the public only in short, garish bursts of larger-than-lifeness, the broad stage comedians of the old Variety days were bound to appear monstrous in some degree, and many were glad to cultivate their monstrousness. You couldn't be sure if they really were sex-mad, or phenomenally mean, or half-daft, or whatever their psychical speciality happened to be. When Max Miller called out 'I'm ready for bed now!' and added 'Anybody?', the challenge was obviously a rhetorical one, but which of the squealing ladies in the stalls could be sure that Max was not capable of repeating his offer, should they accidentally meet in the pub after the show? Low comics always withheld the ultimate reassurance of decency, which gave watching them a small but vital tinge of adventure.

And, of course, created rumours, as I remember from my impressionable infant years spent as a resident of Blackpool. Once the illuminations season was over, most of the town seemed to pass the dank and windy winters with gossip over Jewel and Warriss, Norman 'Over the garden wall' Evans, Jack Pye the wrestler and, above all, George Formby. Formby had a safety-first attitude to publicity, neutralising the tiny naughtinesses of his stick o'rock imagery by keeping his wife Beryl constantly at his side, and presenting to photographers and columnists a domestic image of sumptuous cosiness. A double-page picture in John Fisher's book (in 'The Entertainers' series) shows the Formbys taking the air outside their creeper-covered mock-Tudor ramblerama of a home 'Beryldene'; and in fact, there is scarcely an offstage picture here on which Beryl does not impose her toothily watchful presence. But the word in Blackpool was that the bliss was fake; that the former clog-dancing champion Beryl, well known to be more of a manager than a wife, was also more of a jailer than a manager; and that if George appeared stingy, it was because he was kept on pocket-money and had nothing to spare.

It was all roughly true. The pretence must have been painful for Formby to maintain – it almost certainly affected his health. But professionally, the rumours did him no harm. The suspicion that Formby was treated at home like a schoolboy could only corroborate the sunny, croaky innocence of his stage persona, defuse the sexuality Beryl feared (my wife insists that Formby on film is attractive first, funny second), and put knowledgeable theatregoers even more hugely on George's side when he came before them, grinning and Berylless, with a song.

Though I am very fond of his recordings in a sentimental way, I have never seen George Formby's success convincingly explained. He seems to have been one of those performers who can make you approve of his manner without ever aspiring to impress you first. In search of clues, one looks back to his father. George Formby, Snr, 'The Wigan Nightingale', was a man with remarkably soft yet intense eyes, which he kept resolutely crossed during his 'John Willie' Lancashire dim-wit act. He also had bad lungs, which punctuated his material with a startling repertoire of hilarious but all too genuine coughs – hence his still-surviving catch-phrase 'Coughin' better tonight'. Hence, too, the oxygen tent which Max Wall remembers him keeping on standby in the wings towards the end of his career.

The extra high-pitched croakiness and little-old-mannishness in George Jnr's voice on the early recordings are vocal mannerisms of his father's. He later toned them down, but, importantly, managed to carry over a flavour of the pathos they had signalled. Even in the most rollicking and blatant of his pier-end numbers, a wheezy little phantom of his father's pet character interpolates the odd quavering, sympathetic syllable here and there; and I think it is perhaps these tiny, persistent allusions to a sadder psychology which ensure that Formby's records make a friendly and inclusive experience out of the most scrawny bag of innuendoes.

The success of Thomas Henry Sargent (Max Miller) is more easily accounted for. His roguishness was more straightforwardly brash and hectoring, its delivery speedy and varied. Moreover, Miller tended to stick closer to his known haunts: audiences would visit him at the pre-war Holborn Empire as they would any other of London's monuments. (Formby's film reputation, by contrast, proved strangely exportable, even to Russia, where in 1944 he was voted second to the obvious winner in a national cult-of-personality poll.) But when you get down to the details of Miller's performance, some complicated questions of nuance arise. Take this slice of patter from Holborn 1938, now retailed in a rather eked-out paperback production called *The Max Miller Blue Book*, and also available as part of a recorded performance on EMI One-Up 2075:

> I look better since I came back off my cruise, don't I? No, well, I did look poorly, wasn't I poorly? No, I was, I was dying, before I went away. I look nice now, don't I, duck, don't I? No, I feel better, too. I liked it. It was nice. I'm going again next year. I want to go every year if I can, 'cos it's nice.

Now, if I had been presented with that as a comedy audition piece, and asked to read it in an appropriate style, I should have found it difficult not to treat it to the full Jules-and-Sandy camp treatment. It has all the right twittering and preening rhythms. Only 'duck' where 'ducky' ought to be suggests Miller's costermongering tones, and reveals him to be working at his own sexual defusing process. A lot of his self-glorifying banter has this woman-to-woman flavour, without which, indeed, some of it could hardly have failed to come across the footlights as obnoxious crowing.

The orchidaceous costume, too, was part of the de-threatening tactic, and in the 1938 recording, when the audience seems to take a particular and prolonged delight in his get-up, Miller can be heard reacting in mock self-defence: 'Weeell, shadd*aap*. Nahw, shadd*aaap* . . . ', all in a schoolboyish, don't-be-mean tone which is probably the nearest he cared to come to feyness. Miller's voice is in itself quite as remarkable as Formby's. It's a fat little piercing voice, nasal without being restricted, and it gets round a song rather cleverly at times, on this occasion launching virtually without preamble into an extraordinary jiggy number called 'She shall have music wherever she goes' – which in the classic Miller style goes all round the houses as a tune, but stops absolutely dead at the end, without even a cymbal crash for coda. This leaves the audience still in mid-laugh, and gives the vocalist an opportunity to survey them at leisure, wonder mutely at the fathomless depravity of their minds, and thus wring out two laughs for the price of one.

A more curious and tortured case altogether is Max Wall, as he is at pains to admit in his very affecting autobiography, *The Fool on the Hill*. (The worst thing about this book, leaving aside a prose style that is too idiosyncratic and endearing to be criticised, is its borrowed title, and the rather squirmy way Mr Wall uses it to refer to himself throughout the text.) Now Mr Wall is undergoing a revival, though a revival of what neither he nor I can be very sure. But anyone who has seen his *Aspects of Max Wall* compilation, or the condensation of it that was widely televised on the commercial channels just before Christmas, will confirm that his one-man show is crammed with authentic music-hall 'bits', and that in putting them over, Wall reveals himself as a true clown-comedian rather than a 'comedy performer': that is to say, he embodies his material rather than interprets it. Every aspect of the performance is passed through the filter of his one chosen character, that of the lugubrious droll; it is all one 'act', and nothing disturbs the unity. Even when one has heard a joke before, (like the one about the commercial traveller who, listening through the hotel wall to the honeymoon couple exchanging their simpering endearments – 'Whose is this little bottie, then?' – finally loses patience and bellows into the darkness 'When you two have got your arses sorted out, *I'm trying to get some sleep!*'), it emerges from Wall, through his battery of horrific, dead smiles and gestures

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of long-suffering, as an integral part of a world-view that is not all comic pose.

In fact scarcely a pose at all, one would say after reading this book. Mr Wall has obviously been a bad lad in his time, and his various families have suffered on account of him. But he traces his weaknesses back so plausibly, and with such evident pain, to a possessive, 'erotic' and emotionally reckless mother (who seems to have driven Wall's father to drink, and then replaced him with young stepfathers, friends and yet natural rivals to the growing Max) that it is difficult to feel anything but sympathy. When Wall's domestic life began to go very publicly wrong in the mid-Fifties, they must have made a meal of him in Blackpool of a winter's night.

Max Wall's late successes as a straightish actor suggest, oddly enough, that apt though his eccentricity was to the music-hall, and Grock-like though he has become in his sad old age, he would probably have been just as well suited, as a young man setting out now, to the life of today's 'comedy performer', the all-purpose delivery-man who performs with a show of versatility, who comes up with new material week after week on TV and adapts himself to all of it. But Mr Wall can be thankful he was not born a couple of decades later, and caught up in what was for some professionals a very painful transition from the true low comedianship of the halls to televised comedy-actordom: he could have suffered worse. As it was, the great casualty of this changeover was Tony Hancock. To him I hope to return in a week or two's time, weather permitting.

**Bayan Northcott**

# Perfect Mahlerite

**Gustav Mahler and the Courage To Be** by DAVID HOLBROOK *Vision* £7.95 and £3.95
**Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years** by DONALD MITCHELL *Faber* £15.00

Wandering through the Kungsträdgården in Stockholm last summer, I was nonplussed to hear the *Nachtmusik* from Mahler's Seventh – one of his most ambivalent and fugitive movements – resounding above the swish of fountains and the clopping of clogs from a public loudspeaker system. Doubtless the authorities were trying, with the best of intentions, to insinuate a little high culture. Yet the effect seemed so casual compared with the ardour of my own schoolboy discovery of Mahler back in the Fifties, when his music still had the excitement and rarity of a cause. Was it imagination, I suddenly found myself wondering, or had the subsequent decade and a half of exploitation by star conductors and sensational film makers really changed and diminished this music – not the notes themselves, of course, but some unique power behind them to touch and disturb?

David Holbrook's unexpected book is nothing less than an attempt to elucidate that unique power. His involvement with Mahler began, he tells us, with an accidental hearing of the Ninth Symphony during an illness:

> It was my first experience of his work, and I felt I knew at once what Mahler was saying . . . that the symphony enacted a conflict between love and hate, under a threat of annihilation. When the horns spoke harshly in the first movement I said to myself, 'That is hate'. And in listening I felt, at times, threatened, in the deepest sense, by a horror of loss and emptiness.

The immediate reaction of many a musician might well be that there is no limit to what literary men will read into abstract musical structures, especially on their sick beds. Yet Holbrook insists that further hearings, together with a study of the entire life and output only served to deepen a conviction that 'we have nothing in literature as profoundly concerned with the problems of existence as Mahler's later works'.

Excusing his lack of musical qualifications and fortified with massive doses of existential psychology, he procedes to argue that the circumstances of Mahler's childhood – the brutal father and oppressed mother, the death of the favourite brother – condemned him to deep insecurity from the start. The Eighth Symphony was his last attempt to hold things together by religious faith and 'despite its impressiveness, I find it empty' (I would agree). Worse still, the diagnosis of heart disease and the stresses of his marriage faced Mahler in his late forties with the ultimate threat: that he might die without ever experiencing the gratitude 'of having meaningfully existed'. In a detailed analysis of the Ninth Symphony running to 100 pages of text and music examples, Holbrook tries to show how Mahler composed himself into at least a musical realisation of that gratitude. Broadly this involves the eruption of a 'hate theme' out of the primal rocking of the opening bars and its slow tortuous progress towards the reintegration of the valedictory last pages, which Holbrook hears not as 'world weary', like earlier commentators, but as blissfully fulfilled, for all the imminence of death. Set against the 'egotistical nihilism' of so much modern art he concludes that this affirmation of 'being and love' makes the Ninth 'perhaps the most significant musical work of the century'.

Critics of *The Language of Music*, in which Deryck Cooke attempted to prove that the basic musical intervals – thirds, fifths and so on – are intrinsically expressive of particular emotions, will rightly suspect its dubious influence here. Holbrook's thesis does not wholly depend upon this, however, but rather upon the more general theory of 'affects' – the 'vocabulary' of phrases, harmonies and gestures which have come to 'stand for' various feelings over several centuries of common usage. Even without the evidence of Mahler's song texts and letters, and the harrowing exclamations in his sketches – all of which Holbrook weaves into his richly allusive commentary – it would be impossible for any alert listener to miss the quite special intensity and sense of purpose in Mahler's affective language. Whether one accepts those catastrophic descending semi-tones specifically as a 'hate theme' or not, Holbrook is able to show that it is far more the transformation of their expressive character than of their actual pitches which helps to determine this symphony's overall form. His book leans heavily, as he admits, upon the discoveries of such Mahlerians as the American, Jack Diether. It is also frequently tendentious, repetitive and ill-written, and pedants will have a field day spotting the minor confusions of musical terminology. I started it with extreme scepticism; rehearing the late works, I now feel that no other writer has come so close to defining their profundity.

I wish that Donald Mitchell's long-awaited sequel to his pioneering study, *The Early Years*, communicated such insight. It is there all right, but obscured in the main parody of scholarly method with which he attacks the admittedly tortuous business of dating Mahler's sketches for the first four symphonies. After some 250 pages of this, Mitchell does at last begin to gather his wealth of incidental documentation and comment into a more sustained study of the music itself. Valuable points are made about Mahler's methods of thematic 'telescoping', about the influence of Berlioz on his literary programmes and of Bach on his counterpoint, about the use of 'acoustic space' in the first two symphonies and the way in which the *Wunderhorn*-song finale of the Fourth had already exercised a covert influence over the opening movement of the Third. If only Mitchell had consolidated this and so much else into an opening survey and tidied the proliferating scholarly residue into a series of appendices, no matter how disproportionate! The Fourth Symphony, he remarks,

> creates a peculiar world of its own by contradicting, in developments of a demanding complexity and sophistication, the anticipations of simplicity and guilelessness that the very opening of the work seems to arouse . . . as preparation for the simplicity of the Finale, the true innocence of the child's vision of paradise.

It is observations like this which serve to warn us how much the music of Mahler stands to lose – more, perhaps than that of any other of the great masters – by its demotion to musak.

## Among this week's contributors:

HUGH LLOYD JONES is Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. Among his publications are *Tacitus* and *Females of the Species*, translations of Semonides.

Among ANTHONY STORR's publications are *Human Aggression* (1968) and *Human Destructiveness* (1972).

MARIA LEHMANN has previously contributed short stories to the NS and *Partisan Review*.

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David Leitch

# Prix Spécial

**La Vie devant Soi** by EMILE AJAR *Mercure de France* £4.30

Emile Ajar – whoever he is – has lately become a household name in France. His fame stems from having declined a literary prize, the Goncourt, in circumstances that guaranteed maximum publicity – and there, if you like, is a story calculated to titillate the French national sensibility. Anyone who refuses a large bag of lovely money for whatever reason must be, according to media morality, a saint, a lunatic or a double-dyed villain: all the more so when the refuser is a previously unknown writer, and thus a member of a notoriously impoverished and greedy body of men.

There were several other bull points for news editors in the *'affaire Ajar'*, not least the fact that his name is a pseudonym. Indeed the writer's ostensible, and possibly quite genuine, explanation for turning down a prize guaranteeing a minimum £50,000 in sales and translation rights was to protect his anonymity, Naturally this began guessing games about his true identity: was he an already famous writer – Romain Gary, for instance – or a relation of his? It might be that Ajar's publishers had craftily stage-managed the story, simultaneously hoaxing the jury, breaking Gallimard's stranglehold on this most profitable of French prizes, and guaranteeing even greater profits by their headlined refusal than would have accrued from conventional acceptance.

In any case the novel became an immediate bestseller, even without the Goncourt *imprimatur*, while publishers and *littérateurs* savaged each other with a spite and gusto that would have made the appalling Goncourt brothers themselves feel thoroughly at home. All this quasi-literary passion is peculiarly Parisian and it makes it hard to read and assess the novel on its own merits.

Madame Rosa, the book's heroine, is a retired prostitute in her late sixties. She weighs 95 kilos, has a taste for wigs, kimonos and exotic *maquillage* which remind her of her salad days on the pavement in the Rue des Cygnes and is, in short, an eccentric of literally overblown proportions. When the novel opens she is running a kind of freelance crèche and boarding-house for the unwanted kids of younger comrades still on the game. They all live on the sixth floor of a dilapidated apartment building in the unsalubrious 19th arrondissement (as it was a few years ago). Among her charges is 'Momo', short for Mohammed, a precocious Arab boy who thinks he is about ten.

Ajar does not believe in doing things by halves and Madame Rosa, we learn, is not simply an eccentric old whore with a 22-carat heart; she is also a Polish Jewess who has put in enough years in North Africa to learn Arabic, as well as a former inmate of Auschwitz. This experience has understandably marked her – she has, for example, a *'peur bleue'* of Germans, early morning rings at the doorbell and officials of all kinds. Under her bed she keeps a portrait of Hitler which she likes to look at periodically to remind herself that things might be worse. In the same place she has preserved an extraordinary collection of false identity papers of one kind and another, which she reckons may come in handy for her and her charges.

ID documents do certainly figure more largely in the warp and woof of French living than elsewhere and since one is legally obliged to carry them, on pain of arrest, those of us who are a bit edgy on the subject of identity, a group which no doubt includes the pseudonymous author of this concoction, regard them with a certain ambivalence. Madame Rosa takes the process further than most people, however. She has actually gone to the trouble of acquiring papers which prove beyond doubt that she has no relationship at all with herself, an admirable idea which nonetheless creates complications when she falls seriously ill. It also makes life hard for Momo, the narrator.

Although most of the action takes place in the capital's best-known slum, Momo's world is noticeably low on Frenchmen. Their immediate neighbour, Madame Lola, is for example Senegalese – a former boxing champion of Senegal in fact, who once stopped Kid Govella in three rounds. Nowadays she is an *al fresco* transvestite prostitute, working the Bois de Boulogne after dark, a vocation for which a pugilistic background often comes in handy.

Another regular visitor is Monsieur N'Da Amédée, a pink-suited and diamond-ringed Nigerian pimp, king – for a time anyway – of the best 25 metres of pavement in Pigalle. The sunny side of his character is somewhat tempered by his stone-faced bodyguards, not to mention his habit of carrying a cut-throat razor which makes Momo nervous, who is more at ease with Monsieur Drias, a friendly café-owner, and Monsieur Hamil, the blind and venerable Algerian carpet-salesman who fitfully occupies himself with the kid's religious education as a Muslim. The old man expresses himself with a formality which Momo pertly copies, which explains why everyone is called 'Monsieur' and 'Madame'.

Old Hamil, Madame Rosa and the ménage's medical adviser, the Yiddish-speaking Doctor Katz, are unanimous in their view of Momo as someone remarkable. He is, as Hamil keeps saying, *'un enfant sensible, pas comme les autres'*. It is this precocity, partly explained by the discovery that Momo is not ten at all, but 14 and a bit (or *'et quelques poussières'*, as he would say), which provides the book with its point of view. We are invited to look at the world through the eyes of a wise child, who sometimes sees more clearly than the adult reader, and sometimes makes mis-


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takes which we with our superior wisdom can easily identify. He also makes errors in vocabulary from time to time; in conjunction with his quaint and formal manner of expressing himself, plus some excursions into the *argot* of Belleville, they add to the verbal fun. Momo is part of a literary tradition which includes Holden Caulfield and the ducks in Central Park as well as Zazie and her *argotic* subterranean Paris, although it would be wrong to imply that Ajar is capable of Salinger's bleak yet whimsical vision or Queneau's verbal pyrotechnics.

*La Vie devant Soi* is, in the last analysis, a cosy and cosmetic performance, fulfilling the role of sentimental literature, which is to smooth the jagged edges of uncomfortable reality, and make brimstone taste like treacle. It is, I think, a truly awful book, and its awfulness has a certain unexpected irony about it. Ajar may have nobly declined the Goncourt but in a sense his gesture was otiose: for his achievement has been to write the perfect Goncourt book, a bland novel which fits exactly into the wire basket, along with the frozen peas and the *marrons glacés* of the *supermarché*.

**Hugh Lloyd-Jones**

# Early Days

**The Roman Experience** by L. P. WILKINSON *Elek* £6.00

This book's title recalls two general surveys of proved value. It has more in common with Maurice Bowra's study of the Greek than with John Bowle's study of the English experience, for it is not a history but an account of 'how the Romans felt', illustrated from literature, history and (occasionally) art, and written with due awareness that the sources do not always adequately inform us on this matter. L. P. Wilkinson as ever writes easily and pleasantly; a great deal of information is painlessly communicated; and the reader is often shown both sides of a controversial question from a detached and sober point of view. The treatment of history is scarcely inferior to that of the author's speciality, literature, and the social and economic aspects are not neglected.

Roman history today interests us as much as ever; the centre of discussion has shifted to the 4th century AD, when a collapsing civilisation was drifting towards Christianity. But Roman literature now interests the world far less than Greek literature, which for two centuries has been receiving compensation for the previous age, during which the world saw the Greeks only through Roman spectacles. Yet Roman literature has distinctive qualities of its own. These are not easily suggested, even for those ignorant of Latin, without an attempt to describe the qualities of the language; it helps to have some idea of Latin in its earlier state, before it was made smooth and polished by the artifices of Cicero and the Augustan poets.

Plautus, Ennius and Cato the Elder are the authors who best give the native feel of Latin; yet each of these was profoundly affected by Greek influences. Archaeology and epigraphy have shown that these had permeated Italy far earlier than people supposed before the present century. Even in Cicero's time and after, Latin prose can be concise. The 'milky richness' of Livy stands in contrast with the epigrammatic crispness of Sallust, the orotund periods of Cicero with the Seneca who in Aubrey's words 'writeth as a boar pisseth, *scilicet* by jerks'. Mr Wilkinson is not at his best in writing about early Latin, or about the non-Ciceronian tradition. But about the Augustans he writes very well indeed; a better succinct account than his of that 'baroque masterpiece', Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, would be hard to find.

Recent historians have corrected the earlier tendency to overstress the civilised and philhellenic qualities of the Romans. Their brutalities in Spain and Gaul are common knowledge; the Younger Scipio and Julius Caesar were not notably more humane than lesser men. In their public dealings with the Greeks, sentiment counted for little. Badian has shown how the *fausse bonhomie* of Flaminius, so skilful in soothing and flattering the Greeks, masked an opportunist policy; after the final victory over Macedonia in 168 BC the iron hand shed the velvet glove. Then the savage destruction of Corinth in 146, the same year as that of Carthage, put an end to all illusions. As Mr Wilkinson points out, Polybius's last thoughts about Rome were more sombre than his first. Strasburger has challenged the authenticity of the rosy picture of the philhellenic liberalism of the men around the younger Scipio which is drawn by Cicero. No wonder that in the first half of the next century half the Greek world supported Mithridates, provoking Sulla to merciless reprisals; no wonder that in its second half most Greeks backed Antony against the western world, and again finished on the losing side. The 1st century BC was a period of disastrous cultural decline in the Greek world. The brilliant sceptics of the Academy gave way to third-rate stoicising dogmatists; the deadening craze for mimicking the Attic dialect and style of the great period signified the deadness of the present. After Actium the Augustan peace gave a respite, and two centuries of peace followed; in the end the eastern half of the empire long outlasted the western half. Yet the damage inflicted by the west upon the east during the last two centuries of the pagan era was never quite repaired.

But though one must not be blind to the ruthlessness of the Romans, neither must one fail to recognise the greatness of their achievement. Merciless as they were, the Carthaginians were more so and the 5th-century Athenians were hardly less so. Without Rome, the work of the Greeks (not to mention the Jews) might not have been preserved. Mr Wilkinson rightly gives a fair amount of space to Roman military organisation, a most important subject; reading a book like C. M. Wells's study of the German frontiers, one is amazed that the empire stood up to the barbarian pressures from outside it so long as it did.

It remains true that Greek civilisation profoundly modified the Roman character. Mr Wilkinson shows how for educated Romans Hellenistic moral philosophy took on many of the functions usually performed by a religion. He writes sensibly about the persistence of the ancient cults; unlike some modern writers, he knows that in dealing with the regions of antiquity the question how much people believed is not the most interesting question. The ancient cults served as a link with the past, and so had a deep appeal to sentiment, as Christianity has today for many who do not believe its claims. One can see why the 4th-century aristocrats struggled so desperately to keep the Altar of Victory in the senate-house. Yet as early as the time of Augustus the artificial revival of the ancient cults irritated by its absurdity as well as by its authoritarianism.

**Anthony Storr**

# Of Shrews & Men

**Konrad Lorenz; The Man and His Ideas** by RICHARD I. EVANS *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich* £4.25

Human beings suffer from an ineradicable wish to fit their fellows into neat categories, and are nonplussed by those who refuse to be thus labelled. One reason why Konrad Lorenz is a controversial figure is that he seems larger than life. A man of many parts, he is a Nobel prizewinning scientist who is also a populariser; a teacher whose pupils sometimes attack him; a marvellous observer who is accused of going beyond the evidence; a student of animal behaviour who appears to commit the sin of anthropomorphism. He is generally recognised, together with Niko Tinbergen, as the originator and inspirer of that branch of biology known as ethology. Ethologists are biologists whose main preoccupation is with the study of behaviour, especially with the normal behaviour of animals in their natural habitat. Lorenz probably knows more about the behaviour of more species of animals than anyone else in the world, though his own first love is the greylag goose.

In recent years he has become a prophet, castigating Western man for being false to biological principles, by allowing overpopulation and the destruction of the environment, and by abandoning traditional culture If he were not impatient with the young of today, whom he regards as over-indulged and lacking in discipline, he might well be a hero to students. This new book is a mixture of tape-recorded interviews, selected original papers, criticism and response to criticism Dr Evans has produced similar books about Jung, Skinner, Piaget, Fromm and other famous psychologists. To my mind, the mix is unsatisfying. Although Dr Evans is a skilled interviewer and editor, and has clearly done his homework, the result is neither a popular introduction to the thought of Lorenz nor yet a scholarly ex-

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position and critique, but an uneasy amalgam of both. The best part of the book consists of four of Lorenz's own papers; but here the selection must be criticised. It would, for example, have been better to include his paper on 'Gestalt Perception as a Source of Scientific Knowledge', and omit 'The Enmity between Generations and its Probable Ethological Causes', which is more personal, less interesting, and open to many criticisms.

Perhaps the most interesting paper included is an early one, dating from 1941, translated here as 'Kant's Doctrine of the A *Priori* in the Light of Contemporary Biology'. Kant believed that we could never know the 'thing-in-itself' because how things appear to us is governed by *a priori* categories (of space, time, causality etc.) which determine the way we observe and think. Lorenz, while not denying that the 'thing-in-itself' may for ever be beyond the reach of our particular species, believes that the essence of things is not so far from our perception as Kant implies. For is not the development of man's brain and his intelligence one aspect of his adaptation to reality? 'Is it at all probable that the laws of our cognitive apparatus should be disconnected with those of the real external world?' No, answers Lorenz. We may not descry the whole of reality, but what we do see we see plain. A water shrew, placed in new surroundings, 'gradually learns by rote all possible paths by slowly crawling about'. Since he cannot connect the different paths, he can never take short cuts and therefore must possess a concept of space quite unlike that of most men (though strongly resembling that admitted by the chronically disorientated like Bernard Levin and myself). But what the shrew does perceive is accurate enough so far as it goes and must correspond closely with reality. Lorenz almost convinces one that, had Kant encompassed post-Darwinian biology, he would have formulated his philosophy differently.

Almost, but not quite; for Lorenz does not discuss the possibility that man's capacity for abstraction and conceptual thought is not so much a demonstration of his ability to adapt better to reality as an instance of his alienation from it. Species which exhibit a close fit between their instinctive needs and the environment which satisfies those needs do not require abstractions and pictures, though they remain rigid and inflexible. Man, 'the specialist in non-specialisation' as Lorenz has called him, may actually have a less accurate grasp of reality because he has the capacity of adaptation to so many different realities which are only symbolically equivalent. Man is presumably the only species which can become grossly out of touch with both the reality of the external world and the world of his own instinctive needs.

But how stimulating, how provocative, how unfailingly interesting Lorenz is! He has contributed so much so generously that his impatience with the young and his extrapolations beyond the evidence are easily forgiven. I do not believe that anyone can be both a rigid experimentalist and an intuitive source of inspiration. It is as the latter that Lorenz will always be honoured, and it will require more and better books than this to do justice to his achievements.

**Julian Barnes**

# Conservational

**The Trap** by JENIFER BECKETT *Heineman* £3.90

**Crucial Conversations** by MAY SARTON *Gollancz* £3.20

**Drummer in the Dark** by FRANCIS CLIFFORD *Hodder & Stoughton* £3.25

Not a deepening, or even a flashy, read to be had this week, but enough modest competence, grammatical correctness, and A1 punctuation to ward off the wilder excesses of malice. Take Jenifer Beckett's first novel, about a girl just down from Oxford with only a broken heart to show for it. 'For some people, love is just love, it seems,' muses the relentlessly explicit Sue Garnett:

> And for others, it's a trap. You walk in, taking everything you've got, gaiety, initiative, brains and looks or simple high spirits, and it closes behind you – snap. And you get out, you do just squeak out, yourself, pale and bare and raw.

Homely, honest, basically optimistic stuff, even if the prose is spotty with conjunctivitis. Sue recuperates by taking a job as a governess in an English country house. You may not think people still do this, even in first novels, and Mrs Beckett curtseys to Brontë and Austen as if she isn't sure of the etiquette either. However, the author is married to the publisher of *Country Life*, so at least the fittings and fixtures are authentic; and who can object to meeting the wonderful, crazy, well-dressed owners of Cannock, still forcing themselves to maintain the Brueghel, the Panini, the Decimus Burton conservatory, and a swarm of hooty retainers.

There among them is gracious, heart-warming Lady Isabella, of whom Mrs Beckett, lapsing into Goldwynism, notes, 'If you had been asked to sum up Isabella Southwood in one word, you would still have said, "she's beautiful" '; her boffinish, gig-lamped son; her stunning daughter, wooed by a fashionable biographer; a touchingly arthritic Hungarian refugee; and a dotty gardener with a Secret. Mrs Beckett wields a hockeystick irony which comes across as cheeriness, and only makes them all even more winning. I can't say I discovered a plot among all the people, but things do happen: the conservatory door is left open, someone rifles Sue's bedroom and hush, there may be a ghost. Even as it is, though, it's all going to appeal to a horrible lot of people.

May Sarton's *Crucial Conversations*, weighing in at a third the length, is a passionately wry, one-idea novel about the effects of public life and morality on their private counterparts. At 50, sensitive and artistic Poppy Whitelaw ups and leaves her husband Reed, a successful engineer. Philip, a lifelong friend and member of the wedding, shuttles between the parties, their parents and their children, asking the whys and hows. What emerges is Poppy's belief that 'fundamental dishonesty has been at work all through our culture . . . it has seeped down even into personal relations'. Poppy's decision to leave Reed and attempt to imbue her sculpture with greater honesty is thus a direct reaction to the defoliation of Vietnam. Even if one accepts Miss Sarton's theory of percolating corruption at a simple level, it hardly seems to bear wider application. That Reed lied to himself at the same time as Nixon lied to himself might suggest to some no more than that two people contemporaneously lied to themselves; it takes a curious American guilt mechanism (and a curious idealism about government) to pronounce one as cause and the other effect.

The Irish emergency has at least given thriller writers a new lexicon of images from which to perm, and a new range of ambiguity to the goodies' motives. Francis Clifford's last book, about a bombing wave by an IRA splinter group, has lots of informed Ulster detail – night patrols shooting out the street-lamps, a post-Widgery interrogation scene; while on the home front, the bombs are planted in just the sort of places readers are already jumpy enough about in real life.

In addition, there is a scary technical refinement – a device which enables bombs to be detonated by radio signal, from a safe distance and at an exactly chosen time. It's nasty and exciting, and in the search for the terrorists' supply chain there's a delightfully ingenious central bluff, several moves deep. So it's odder for Hodder, in a black-edged obituary-cum-puff, to claim for Mr Clifford more than his five million world sales would seem to imply. 'Writing for me,' he is quoted as saying, 'is what T. S. Eliot called "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings".' Meanwhile, back at the text – 'sickening despair . . . waist like an hour-glass . . . disaster snarling at his heels . . . peaches-and-cream stewardess . . . malice like an acid in the darkness of his heart'. Language, one feels, has Mr Clifford in a crushing Boston crab.

**John Fuller**

# Grasshopper Mountain

Down we go, hand in hand,
Jolted at each step, laughing
And stumbling. It's impossible
To place each foot in haste
Squarely on tussock or stone
For spraying out beneath us
In fountains like little delayed springs
Are all the golden grasshoppers
of Penllechog!

We seem to descend like gods
With news that there are no gods:
'The lids are rattling! Heather
Has the secret: his cups
Are full of sun!' Down
We go, while at our feet
Patient of our absurd clumsiness
Are all the golden grasshoppers
of Penllechog!

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# Films

**David Wilson**

## Clinical Evidence

**Scoundrel in White** *Studio One*
**Konfrontation** *Phoenix*
**Rancho Deluxe** *Continentale*
**The Counsellor** *Warner West End*

The French have always said that we were wrong to canonise Chabrol, and on the evidence of *Scoundrel in White* they may have a point. Made four years ago as *Docteur Popaul*, and evidently big box-office in France, this mess of a movie arrives here gratingly dubbed and can only be described as an aberration. A black comedy of sorts, it has the lingering after-taste of a very bad joke. The joke was written, after a novel by Hubert Monteilhet, by a regular Chabrol collaborator, Paul Gegauff. These two have had a lot of superior fun dissecting the flesh of bourgeois morality, but this is a carve-up, done not with the usual scalpel but with a butcher's knife. If self-parody was intended, it only goes to show that parody is best left to others.

The style of the piece, consistent only in its bludgeoning vulgarity, is aggressively announced. Jean-Paul Belmondo, as the scoundrel of the title, bets his medical student *copains* that he can lay the ugliest woman. Mere attractiveness, he claims, is commonplace; the rare pleasure is the moral beauty of the unattractive. He wins the game (a kind of snapshot poker) and on the proceeds holidays in Tunisia. Enter Mia Farrow, grotesquely encumbered with buck teeth, rimless glasses and a leg iron, and the game is played for higher stakes. Father, a prototype Chabrol cynic, welcomes the match and makes Belmondo a wedding present of his private clinic in Bordeaux. Complications set in with the arrival of Miss Farrow's sister (Laura Antonelli), a nubile nymphomaniac who soon has a nightly arrangement with her brother-in-law. But the stud's wife is not just an ugly face: even in cod Chabrol justice has the last laugh. How it happens would be as tedious to tell as it is to watch. Enough to say that Belmondo loses more than his wife. And that this whole botched job, all thumbs in cheek, seems more than likely to knock a dent in Chabrol's reputation this side of the Channel. Even the murders, usually the high spot of this director's entertainments, are done with a blunt axe. The moral may be that if you set out to make fun of yourself you can end up with egg on your face.

The Swiss cinema, which came down from the mountains a few years ago with films like *The Salamander* and *The Invitation*, is alive and well. Rolf Lyssy's *Konfrontation* (subtitled 'Assassination in Davos') is not the best of the recent crop but is also not without merit. This is a lesson in unfamiliar history. In 1936, David Frankfurter, a Yugoslav Jew studying medicine in Berne, bought a one-way ticket to Davos and coolly assassinated Wilhelm Gustloff, leader of the Swiss Nazi Party and the Third Reich's effective ambassador in Switzerland. Frankfurter's motive, he said at his trial (here rehearsed in detail), was a symbolic retribution for the persecution of Jews in Germany, a personal vengeance since he had no accomplices and no political connections. He was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment, but released in 1945 and went to what was soon to be Israel, where he lives now. Lyssy documents the act and its background methodically. The period detail – clothes, decor, manners – registers unobtrusively, supplemented by newsreel (Hitler ranting, Gustloff's military funeral) which takes its natural place in the measured unfolding of events.

The murder itself comes over as it probably was: an act of quiet despair, but deliberated. Frankfurter (Peter Bollag, solid if not stolid) is shown into Gustloff's home, its tasteful domesticity ruffled only by the Nazi pennant on the wall and the signed portrait of the Führer, and empties his gun into the square-jawed Nazi. He says nothing; nor does his face, at this or any other moment, which is disturbing for the wrong reasons. Lyssy's approach, unstressed except for some not so oblique digs at his country's comfortable neutrality, is in the end too careful, I think, to allow of more than a grudging respect for Frankfurter's solitary revenge. The political implications of his act, not least the fact that if anything the murder provoked more harassment of German Jews, are left in the air. The real David Frankfurter, interviewed in Israel at the end of the film, provides only a fear for the future. It could happen again, he says bleakly. He doesn't say what.

The erratic Frank Perry (with both *The Swimmer* and *Doc* under his belt, variety is the name of his game) does his reputation little good, though also not much harm, wih *Rancho Deluxe*, a sort of comedy contemporary Western with sex. Jeff Bridges and Sam Waterston are two Montana drifters who get their kicks and their livelihoods from rustling the occasional steer. Their method is original: a never-miss pot shot with a buffalo gun and there's meat enough for anyone's freezer after a little work with a power saw. Also involved are a couple of randy girls, a bored rancher and his lusting lady, and Slim Pickens as an ex-horse thief turned stock detective (that's what the man said). The script, by Thomas McGuane, is the thing here, leaping in wittily and as often as not scatologically to salvage a plot which wanders all over the great plains. In among the camp farrago there are lines to be relished, as when Waterston, a grass-reared Indian, tells his white buddy that he's 'just trying to embrace the new culture'. And the decor scores in places, what with a ranch house equipped with a wrought iron balcony, a grand piano and Navajo blankets, the height of fashion down Montana way.

*The Counsellor* is gore and carnage Italian style. Martin Balsam is a Mafia *capo* in San Francisco who buys trouble when his godson and lawyer wants out of the family. An objection is lodged by a less favoured son, in the shape of a clutch of corpses. Subsequent deaths are frequent and full of variety: one luckless restaurant owner is shoved into his pizza oven. Dialogue is sparse – which is just as well since the script appears to have been concocted in haste and the actors don't seem to have been shown it. The one remembered line is faultlessly delivered by the film's only woman of consequence: 'Please tell your Godfather that if you're in love it doesn't matter if your name is Murchison or Magadino.' For a moment there the killing had to stop.

*John Coleman is on holiday*

# Television

**Eric Korn**

## Cwm All Ye

Travelogues in the cinema were always a bore, time for popcorn or raspberries; but they are the pith of television which is every where at once, like the Zohar. Last Monday was an astonishing evening's viewing, disparate cultures rattling unyieldingly like marbles, a subtitled polyglottery of German, Kirghiz, Kiriwina, Pushtu and Dobuan (only the Welsh left untranslated). A carnival of diversity, anything but a global village or the ignorant and mischief making aren't-we-all ecumenism of the Family of Man.

First the Kirghiz (*Disappearing World* Granada); and not the Kirghiz SSR, a proudly independent republic within the Soviet family of nations, but 3,000 herdsmen who have evaded the terrors of collectivisation in that tentacle of Afghanistan carved by the British to wall off India, that looks so intriguing on the map. Less inviting when you get there, a high cold stony valley; 60 days up and down to go shopping in Kabul. They've escaped socialism; the Khan ('we think first of God, then of the Khan') lets them herd his sheep and cull every year. His annual income is £15,000 which ain't yakfeed in the Hindu Kush. He's generous, especially with other people's money, nagging a Kabuli tallyman into cancelling a bad debt. (The defaulter had bashfully proffered his daughter: she wept fearing the pestilential lowlands a mere 5,000 feet above sea level.)

*How Green Was My Valley* (BBC-1 Mondays; director, Ronald Wilson) seems a full and faithful adaptation (by Elaine Morgan) of this rich, unfashionable novel. Siân Phillips and Stanley Baker are compelling as parents of an extraordinary brood of Morgans: sensitive, wet Owen (Mike Gwilym), fiery Ianto (Keith Drinkel), Ifor

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(Norman Comer) and brave, lame Huw (Rhys Powys) who is going to write this all down some day: beautifully differentiated, even for me, and I have trouble telling the Marx brothers apart. Gareth Thomas coped with the ungrateful part of wise, tolerant, progressive Rev. Gruffydd ('Good God! Engels,' exclaims Ianto, scanning his shelves) while Aubrey Richards had more fun with the pharisaical turkey rustler, Elias. The photography is tender and unobtrusive, the settings as dark, gleaming and Welsh as anthracite. It seems like parody only because it's the prototype of so much evergreen corn.

The world of *Clayhanger* (ATV, Thursdays) is less familiar. There may be pikelets still for tea in Burslem, but the distinctness of the Five Towns from each other and the world has blurred, the accent dulled to generalised Midland, not a smoking chimney left – the only bottle kiln is now a museum. Douglas Livingstone has a tougher job with the adaptation and I'll postpone judgment: so far Darius (Harry Andrews) seems too pernickety an old monster to inspire fear; the excision of Bennett's account of his dreadful childhood looks a mistake. Joyce Redman wildly overplayed the overdrawn Auntie Hamps but William Relton is promising as young Edwin. Will the Potbank Picaro beat the Rhondda Romantic to self-awareness, as puberty (the Beecher's of the *bildungsroman*) looms up? Watch next week. And the next.

Then, back on that amazing Monday, came – after an adequate rendering of Priestley's account of the West Riding natives, *When We Are Married* (BBC-1) – counterstrike of the week, a Melanesian oldster discussing the sexual life of Malinowski – *Horizon*: *The Trobriand Experiment* (BBC-2), written and produced by Alec Nisbett, cameraman John Hooper. A great lover, but mistaken: his subjects *did* know about fatherhood; they were just too delicate-minded to discuss it with an anthropologist.

He also understood the power of women: indeed there is a whole social network involving 'women's wealth' which, like the rotten sardines in the joke, is not for eating but just for buying and selling. Injections of tourist cash clot the economic bloodstream. John Kasaipwalova, the Islands' first graduate, is trying to revive old ways; not as an ethnographic exhibit but a parallel culture to the jet-hopping visitors, neither exploiting nor exploited. His recipe: stop carving for the airport lounge trade and cultivate your yam gardens. These kudos-bearing vegetables are the chief medium of the present-giving nexus; the largest yam in history, a Concorde among yams, with a backbreaking load of prestige, was passed around and dropped by the recipient like a hot sweet potato. The yams go into status-proving stores; in time of scarcity they can be eaten, unlike money. There are problems: the cooperative shops failed because it's virtuous to treat your needy kin; but no one could doubt the resilience of the culture after seeing what they've done to cricket. Feathered, boned and painted players, 59 a side, greeting a catch or a boundary with erotic stomps: 'Yah, my hands are magnetic, the ball sticks fast.' One batsman was introduced as captain and umpire of the Airplane team.

*William Joyce* (BBC-1) ended the night. A just programme, but it couldn't find much sympathy for this appalling man who began as a stoolie for the Black and Tans and then went to the bad. A kindly old gentleman called Sir Oswald looked down his aristocratic nose; as did *hoch-geboren* Wolf Mittler. Another Deutschlandsender colleague mocked his version of the Hitler salute: 'not like a normal German . . . er . . . Nazi'. Joyce's drunken Götterdämmerung speech was uncannily Churchillian.

*The Invention of America* (BBC-1) had James Burke and Raymond Burr explaining US technology with vaudeville, cakewalks, and silent movie routines; and a total absence of economics, feel for machinery, or respect for the viewers' intelligence. Two hours of condescending trash.

Joseph Papp's *Much Ado About Nothing* (BBC-2) also condescended. It was barber-shop bard; sweetly pretty, but unintelligently broadened and with a cast who often didn't understand the lines. Misty mornings on the chalk downs in *Gamekeeper's Year* (BBC-2), 'penny a head for vermin, but herons were the boys, half-a-crown for them'. Misty sunsets in *Three Men in a Boat* (BBC-2, directed by Stephen Frears); Tom Stoppard kept close to the book, its chunks of embarrassment intact; Jerome's shipmates solemn small animals. Mole and Ratty at the gates of dawn.

*A Touch of the Casanovas* (ITV) is the new Frankie Howerd vehicle. Jokes, based on the well-loved convention that any word of two syllables or more denotes genitalia, were not so much telegraphed as sent Passenger Luggage in Advance. Adorers will adore it. *Fawlty Towers* (BBC-2) back next week, but bet most of you missed John Cleese and Alan Coren demolishing St Andrews (*A Place in History*, Thames). Your bad luck.

# Jazz

**Charles Fox**

# Top Scores

**Gil Evans/Tadd Dameron: The Arrangers' Touch** *Prestige PR24049* (2 mono LPs) £3.50
**Gil Evans: Pacific Standard Time** *Blue Note BN-LA461-H2* (2 LPs) £4.75
**George Russell: Outer Thoughts** *Milestone M47027* (2 LPs) £4.69

Major breakthroughs in jazz have all been the work of soloists, the men closest to the action. Composers and arrangers move in afterwards, like grammarians tidying up a language, rationalising the discoveries but also giving the musicians a context and perspective. Jelly Roll Morton, the first jazz composer, took what was nearest to hand, the improvising front-line of New Orleans jazz, using it inside works that reflected his own musical identity. Duke Ellington, a thorough-going romantic, built his strategy around the virtuoso skills of the generation of individualists who followed in the wake of Louis Armstrong.

The pioneering bebop soloists – Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell – were adept at complicating the ground plan, manufacturing new themes out of old chord sequences. But what really concerned them was what happened in between the opening and closing theme statements rather than any sort of compositional development. Others were to attend to that, notably Thelonious Monk – and Tadd Dameron. Most of Dameron's best pieces involved good trumpet players; first Fats Navarro, and later the two men to be glimpsed in *The Arrangers' Touch*: Clifford Brown and Kinny Dorham. His penchant was for relating melody to harmony rather than toying with orchestral colour (Dameron always maintained that he never looked upon himself as an arranger). Yet included among these tracks is 'Fontainebleau', a three-part impression of the palace and its surroundings, which does without solos altogether. Significantly enough, this piece achieves success through its melodic structure rather than its colouring or texture.

Tadd Dameron died of cancer in 1965 after a strangely unlucky and frustrated career. (Many of his most interesting arrangements appear to have been written for bands – Jimmie Lunceford's, Count Basie's, Tommy Dorsey's – which never got round to recording them.) But both Gil Evans and George Russell are happily alive and still at work, even if their present-day pieces seem very different from those on these LPs, most of which date from the late Fifties and early Sixties. Unlike Tadd Dameron, Evans has written relatively few original themes, being preoccupied instead with the organisation of sound. (A much-quoted anecdote relates how, as a boy, he used to be able to tell what kind of car was coming without turning round.) That appetite for plushness, for assembing textures that undulate in the background, rather like the aurora borealis, reached its most celebrated consummation in Evans's collaboration with Miles Davis.

On these LPs Evans often makes use of Johnny Coles, a trumpeter whose style is akin to Davis's. But in Evans's half of *The Arrangers' Touch* the principal soloist is Steve Lacy, a soprano saxophonist with a lemony sound and an unrhetorical manner (for a time Lacy worked alongside Sidney Bechet, then went on to flank such uncompromising modernists as Thelonious Monk and Cecil Taylor). The scoring is full of Evans's favourite practices: the mingling of textures; intricate yet economical writing for brass (most of Evans's ideas, like those

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of Ellington in his early period, have been entrusted to brasses rather than reeds); swift changes of tempo. The material ranges from a murder ballad that Leadbelly used to sing (its chords turn out to be remarkably like those of 'Sweet Georgia Brown'), through pieces by Berlin, Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart to what is perhaps Tadd Dameron's most enticing theme, 'If You Could See Me Now'. And just as Dameron played the piano sparingly yet effectively, Evans is also adept within that style – signposting chords, underlining the musical verbs – often referred to as 'arranger's piano'.

Simply to glance at the titles of the pieces making up *Pacific Standard Time* might lead to misunderstanding; to imagining that the purpose was didactic. For what Evans did here was to rework some of the most famous themes in jazz history, even including that little orchestral masterpiece, Don Redman's 'Chant of the Weed' (the title did not, as a contemporary reviewer maintained, refer to dense vegetation in the American South, nor, for that matter to happenings in the Sargasso Sea). One LP revolves around the alto playing of Cannonball Adderley, heard at its most impetuous and joyful in Jelly Roll Morton's *King Porter Stomp* (Evans quotes from Fletcher Henderson's famous arrangement for both his own band and Benny Goodman's). As remarkable as anything, however, is a stately yet relaxed version of John Lewis's 'Django', complete yet full of implication, like one of James Joyce's epiphanies.

Both Tadd Dameron and Gil Evans could be called pragmatists. Largely self-taught, they had access to bands at early stages of their careers, and were able, just like Ellington, to listen next morning to what they wrote the night before. As a boy, George Russell heard Fate Marable's band aboard a riverboat; he grew up against a musical background (his father was a professor at Oberlin), yet is supposed to have picked up the fundamentals of arranging from a fellow patient in a sanatorium while recovering from tuberculosis. Russell has always been a dedicated theorist, concerned particularly with the matter of gravitas, devising a method loosely describable as pan-tonality (he has published a lengthy thesis on the subject, *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organisation*).

Nevertheless, however intellectual the preparation, George Russell has created his finest music in collaboration with exceptional performers: Don Ellis, whose trumpet playing, daringly lyrical, had not yet become ostentatiously eclectic; the late Eric Dolphy, an alto saxophonist and bass clarinettist who still awaits the acclaim properly due to him (Miles Davis goofed disastrously when he declared that Dolphy always sounded as if somebody was standing on his foot); and, in 'You Are My Sunshine', the folksy song written by Jimmie Davis, one-time governor of Louisiana, the voice of Sheila Jordan, sounding vulnerable and all too human inside the bleak landscape conjured up by Russell's scoring.

**Tarjei Vesaas**

# Once Upon a Time

there was this little birch
and they said she should have leaves
by mid-May.
She could have danced, almost,
for that promise
and because she was as skinny as a child.

But first, they said, there would come
a warm wind; and he did.
He teased her, he waltzed her around, she was
dizzy and sweet and tender
in every bud.
And when the bird came
and sat on a thin twig
singing, Now, it's Now –

she couldn't understand at all,
not at all.
But in the evening
she stood slender and gowned
in her freshness
in her translucent new green
and she was utterly transformed.

She turned about slowly
loosening herself quite free of dirt.
Ho hum, she sang, very quietly, now
to sail, like a green veil, over the hill,
for ever, away for ever –

sang the little birch.

*translated by* HENNING SEHMSDORF *and* LESLIE NORRIS

**Maria Lehmann**

# Goodbye, Prospero

My aunt used to be a waitress in 'Dullar and Fish', that old-established, world-re nowned restaurant in the City: gentlemer and oysters only! When 'Dullard and Fish closed down pending demolition – thougl the place hasn't been demolished even nov – my aunt, who had worked there for 3 years out of a possible 135 (in the end, he own face looked as if it needed prisin open), decided to move in on one of th empty upstairs rooms, the one at the corne overlooking Cheapside, where she used t have her 'regulars'. 'Babies, the lot o them,' she said, lugging her bits and piece upstairs, 'and I know every gravy-spot o the wainscoting.' That's when I hit on th idea of entertaining Slaker and Little' business friends on those very premises. A perfect party! Our guests, many fron abroad, appreciated being received amids the old oak panelling, replete with tradition and with my aunt, all dignity in her frill white cap, ministering to their every need 'There'll always be an England,' they said raising their steins.

As you see, ladies and gentlemen, in thos days we were in the City but not of it though, even then, we had established grati fyingly close contacts. Since then of cours the turnover of Haker and Slittle has, i the last year alone, quadrupled. Nothing t complain about. Anyway, your chairma does not believe in complaining, but i self-help and self-reliance. Ladies an gentlemen, here is to self-help and self reliance.

Occasionally, someone – not the kind c customer we'd care to stay in contact wit – would query: 'What are Soaker an Slottle actually in?' – to which the onl answer is of course: 'Go back to Squar One and learn your ABC!' The last thin a self-respecting, forward-looking firm lik Slawker and Hittle would contemplate is tc as they used to call it, 'manufacture' things Others were more insinuating: 'How come Suckle and Hotter are doing well just whe everybody else . . .' With, thick as a fis behind, the threat: 'Hadn't you better te us your racket?' Others, still, tried flattery 'How fortunate for you to be backed by Lor Hanky-Panky!' Actually, all the backing w got from that direction was via Lor Hanky-Panky's side-kick, an enterprisin but indiscreet man who, alas, wore th unacceptable face of capitalism on hi sleeve and is now doing a stretch up North not 20 km. from where His Lordship ha his grouse moors. Still, why disillusio people? Prosperity never hurt anybody an there's no need to apologise for it.

The only rub in all that ointment, s to speak, was my aunt. Even though he continued occupancy of that upstairs roor was legally speaking, of doubtful validity she took to lecturing us: 'You'll have Th

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Law on me up there. Who do you think I am? Rapunzel, letting her hair down for the bailiffs? You people just don't know where to draw the line.' – 'Listen, auntie,' I told her, 'a line's made up of a hell of a lot of points, most of them mute. Business is business and can't be measured like it was sausages, so many inches sawdust, so many inches . . .' – 'Ah,' she says, ' I see. So it's millimetres now! Exporting butter and things from one country to another, the quick way via Timbuktoo, and then back where it came from. You watch it – some of that butter mountain's going to stick to your fingers.' – 'Huh,' I say, 'some people should stick to their Dover Souls. Slatteur, Petit & Cie. wouldn't touch butter with a bargepole. Just the same, don't you want Britain to show the flag somewhere? Are you so craven you don't want us to take any risks? All right, supposing 'Sick Transit', our subsidiary, loses a million or two on the way to the Cayman Islands! What's that to you? Not your money, is it? Nor ours, come to that.'

So she just goes on wringing a starched serviette – she kept on finding starched serviettes all over the premises, hidden away in the most unlikely places: 'And supposing someone catches you out?' – 'Who?' I says. 'Who's going to cast the first share? Remember that worthy citizen who'd managed to salt away a nice pork-barrel, worth five or six million quid? Didn't he jolly well have to wait till he was dead before being served with a writ? Well, Klein, Klein & Little, A.G. proudly operating from Brussels an der Spree, aren't dead yet.'

As you see, ladies and gentlemen, we had outgrown my aunt, we also had outgrown the City of London. But I must not keep you any longer from your well-earned bubbly, procured, by your chairman, at exorbitant cost, commensurate with our new surroundings. For here we are, ladies and gentlemen, in our new, splendiferous premises in Kuwait, arrived on the latest gravy-boat, so to speak, safe from auntie, safe from a lot of other things we won't mention. Let me remind you that Klein, Muhamed & Ali yield to no one in their love of country. Unfortunately, as we all know only too well, that country, that green and pleasant island, is now in the hands of elements . . .

# Weekend Competition

**No 2394 Set by Hermaphrodite**

A typically unfunny letter to the *Daily Telegraph* renamed some of the classics in the light of the new sex discrimination laws: *Dombey and Descendant* and *Personfield Park* were two of the rib-ticklers. Competitors are asked to rewrite any well-known passages of prose or verse in such a way as to make the new laws look silly – but beware of the obvious, please. There's been too much of that already. 120 words or 12 lines by 23 January.

**Result of No 2391 Set by John Stanley**

Competitors were asked to provide truly up-to-the-minute shopping lists for the twelve days of Christmas.

**Report by Little Keith**

*Peccavi:* I should have realised that the form of the song was too narrow to allow for much invention. Far and away the most diverting entry came from Liselotte Leschke; she sent me the (I hope) genuine Hawaiian version, which I print below. She gets £5, as do the other winners.

Numba Twelve Day of Christmas
My Tutu give to me:
Twelve television,
Eleven missionary,
Ten can of beer,
Nine pound of poy,
Eight ukelele,
Seven shrimp a-swimming,
Six hula lesson,
*Five big fat pig*;
Four flower lei,
Three dry squid,
Two coconut,
And a minah bird in a papaya tree.

LISELOTTE LESCHKE

On the twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me:
Twelve nymphos mating,
Eleven virgins waiting,
Ten colonels spanking,
Nine schoolboys cranking,
Eight nuns assenting,
Seven monks repenting,
Six queers consenting,
*Five dutch caps*;
Four birth pills,
Three condoms,
Two IUDs,
And a call girl calling on me.

TIM HOPKINS

On the twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me:
Twelve men redundant,
Eleven workers striking,
Ten factories closing,
Nine carmen idling,
Eight Yanks a-grumbling,
Seven Japs rejoicing,
Six Krauts a-crowing,
*Five dole queues*;
Four Chrysler duds,
Three faulty cars
Two Leyland loans,
And E. Varley giving money for free.

HARRISON EVERARD

On the twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me:
Twelve grumblers grumbling,
Eleven strikers striking,
Ten widows weeping,
Nine bombers blasting,
Eight traders bilking,
Seven statesmen trimming,
Six parsons praying,
*Five last flings*;
Four bawling kids,
Three wet beds,
Two words of love,
And an overpriced, underhung Tree.

MARY HOLTBY

**Assiac**

# Chess Board

**No 1364 Nona & Nana**

So Nona Gaprindashvili has held on to the world title which was repeatedly challenged but never seriously threatened since she won it in 1962 at the age of 21; there can be no doubt that ever since (and presumably for the clearly foreseeable future) Nona's position in female Chess is quite as supreme as Vera Menchik's was in her day. The latest challenger was Nana Alexandria (26) who, despite the failure of her challenge might still be considered No 2 in the female chess-world. As a matter of fact, her pre-match record against Nona of five draws and only one loss was creditable indeed. Oddly enough, this particular world-title match might as well have been fought for the city championship of Tbilisi which happens to be the home-town of both girls; they still live there, and so do their respective trainers, the grandmasters Gipslis and Gurgenidze. Moreover, both Nona and Nana were students (though, of course, not contemporaries) at Tbilisi University and both of them graduated in English. Here is the third game of the match which should have been a draw but wasn't. It might be headlined "Nona nobbling Nana". Gaprindashvili played White.

**1) e4,Ktf6; 2) Ktc3,e5; 3) g3,Bc5; 4) Bg2,0-0; 5) d3,Re8; 6) Ktge2,Ktc6; 7) 0-0,Ktd4; 8) h3,c6; 9) Kh2,Kte2:; 10) Qe2:,d5; 11) Bg5,de:; 12) Kte4:,Be7; 13) Ktf6:†,Bf6:; 14) Bf6:,Qf6:; 15) f4** Trying to make something out of a level position **,Bd7; 16) f5,b6; 17) Rae1,Rac8; 18) Be4,c5; 19) h4,Bc6; 20) Qg2,Be4:; 21) de:** White wishes to avoid Rook-swops, **Rcd8; 22) Re2 Rd4; 23) Kh3,Red8; 24) g4,Qd6** Black's domination of the d-file more or less levels the position; **25) Rff2,Rd1; 26) g5,Qd4; 27) g6!** A daring attempt, **hg:; 28) fg:,fg:** She must, of course, beware of . . . **f6??** because of 29) Qg4 and nasty threats; **29) Qg6:,Rh1†; 30) Kg2,Rh4:?** Since she can't hope for more than a draw she should have played . . . Qd1 forcing the champ to take the perpetual on f7 and h5; **31) Rf7!** A crafty move setting a trap into which Nana promptly falls; she could have still had a safe draw by . . . Rg4†!; 32) Qg4:,Kf7:; 33) Rf2†,Kg8; 34) Qe6†,Kh8; (Teschner's analysis in *Deutsche Schachzeitung*), **Rh7??**, the blunder Nona hoped to provoke; **32) Ref2!**, and all of a sudden Black is helpless against the mating threats based on Rf8† and Qe6† . . . Qc4 no good against 33) b3.

When using the term *'clearly* foreseeable future' with regard to Nona's tenure of her crown I do not exclude more distant hopes. After all, we have the substantial mastery of Jana Hartston steadily improving and some very much up-and-coming youngsters.

As for the 4-pointer for beginners I had better dig out one of many feathers in dear old Vera's cap (by no means old when, alas, she perished in that untimely accident). Black had just blundered 17) . . . h6; how was she forced to resign three moves later? For 6 ladder-points **B** is a win, neat and instructive. **C** (for 7) is a draw, an ingenious miniature which, in the main variation, leads to stalemate in six. Usual prizes, entries by 19 January.

**A: Vera Menshik – Teresa Mora 1939:** / 2rq1rk1 / 1p2bpp1/p3pkt1p/3ktKt1B1/P2P4/ 1B6/1P2QPPP/3RR1K1/.

**B: A. Nimzovitch:** /3k3r/4Rp2/3Pp2p/3P4/ 8/1K6/16/.

**C: H. Mattison:** /k7/2K5/8/B2Kt4/2kt5/8/ p7/1Kt6/.

**Report on No 1360** *Set 12 December*

**A: 1) Qh6†!!,gh:; 2) Rf6:†,Kg7; 3) Bh6†,Kg8; 4) Rf8††.**

**B: 1) Qc3:!,Rf3†; 2) Qf3:,ef:; 3) b5,Bf2:; 4) b6,Bd4:; 5) b7,Ba7; 6) b8=Q,Bb8:;** stalemate.

**C: 1) Bc6!,Rb1†; 2) Ke2,Rh1; 3) Bg2†!!** (Bh1:?), **Kg2:; 4) Ktf4†,Kg1; 5) Ke1!,g2; 6) Kte2††.**

Too easy, many flawless entries. Prizes: E. Allan, D. Berdy, W. Goerke, E. Jarah, R. G. Shrubsall.

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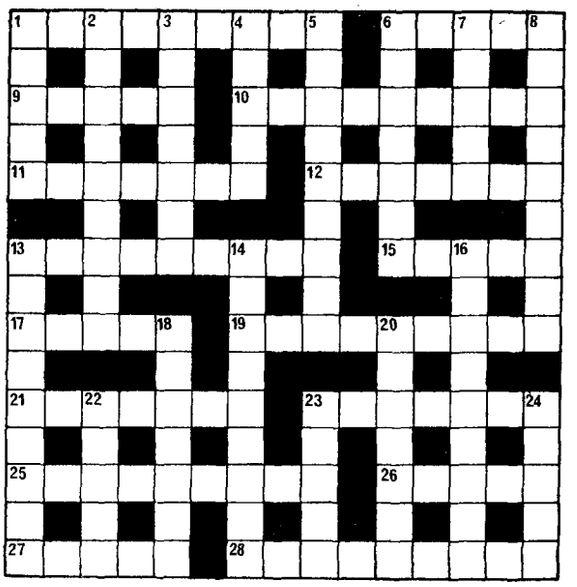
# Weekend Crossword 1146

**PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1146, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 20 Jan.**



ACROSS

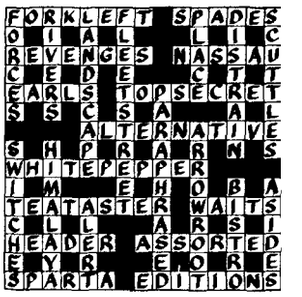
1. There are worries about one being seen in the paper in these vehicles (9).
6. The boy carries me wounded (5).
9. In here be careful of the instrument (5).
10. It takes time and money to produce evidence of faulty washers (9).
11. Sell tin in exchange for food (7).
12. Means of taking as guide (7).
13. Fitting without a measurement for the driver (9).
15. She is back between nine and eleven (5).
17. Additional clause which is not pedestrian (5).
19. Street I enter to stop trouble as a punishment (9).
21. Man of violence backed up in short exchanges (7).
23. Effeminate fellow has silk entwined in his hair (7).
25. Bob as coach is making a great effort (9).
26. Start sleeping back to front in clubs (5).
27. Pardon right before sentence is reversed (5).
28. Lost a race badly although it provides effortless movement (9).

DOWN

1. In bare surroundings this is the gondolier's song (5).
2. Forest dweller gives bird cover (5, 4).
3. 'This to hear Would Desdemona seriously ——' (*Othello*) (7).
4. Unusual stage entrances (5).
5. The team blushes, the cheeky things! (9).
6. There is nothing on after the light satire (7).
7. There is nothing in backward type or half-wit (5).
8. Reckless one needs to moderate his road speed (9).
13. One who pays for animals' expression of pleasure about the hunt (9).
14. Being a rake, the composer gets into a row (9).
16. Excitement as team leader organised game (9).
18. I follow the old man into opening for golf ball (7).
20. Hostility when west is surrounded by misfortune (7).
22. River marks end of conflict over a border (5).
23. Wonderful Scot holds most of his drink! (5).
24. Problem for a bogus person (5).

SETSQUARE

**Solution to No 1144**




**Prizewinners to No 1144**

E. Smith (York)

A. W. Bowyer (Taunton)

H. J. Walls (London SE22

# APPOINTMENTS

**LEWISHAM COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

The LCCR requires an

INFORMATION OFFICER

who is able to project the organisation into the wider community.

The officer will need to have journalistic experience and an ability to communicate well with people. An understanding of community relations work would also be essential.

The commencing salary for the post will be AP4 Grade £3,366 + £261 London Weighting.

Please write giving details and names and addresses of two referees to Asquith Gibbs, Senior Community Relations Officer, LCCR, 48 Lewisham High Street, London, SE13 5JH.

Applications should be received not later than Monday, 19 January 1976.

**TEA, A CHAT AND A JOB** at the Winifred Johnson Office Staff Bureau, 118 New Bond Street, W1 (opp. Fenwick's). 493 3005.

**TEACHER**

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general subjects and boys' games at a small independent co-educational boarding school.

Apply:

**Principal,**
**Childs Court School,**
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**UNITED KINGDOM IMMIGRANTS ADVISORY SERVICE**

Invites applications for the post of

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Duties include budgetting and accounts, salaries, office purchases, administration and personnel matters in busy multiracial office. Closing date 20 January 1976.

Details and application form from Director, UKIAS, Brettenham House, Savoy Street, London WC2E 7EN. Tel. 240 5176.

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**

Applications are invited by the Governing Body of the College for the following full-time statutory post:

LECTURESHIP

(equivalent to the grade of Senior Lecturer) in

FRENCH AND ROMANCE PHILOLOGY

Prior to application, further information (including details of application procedure) should be obtained from:
Mr. J. P. McHale, Secretary and Bursar, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. Telephone: 693244 Ext. 431.

The latest date for receipt of completed applications is Friday, 13 February 1976.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

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NATFHE invites applications for

TWO REGIONAL OFFICIALS

in the London and Home Counties Region. Starting salary £4,593 (+ an appropriate London Allowance).

Further details from the General Secretary, NATFHE, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BH. Tel. 01-387 6806.

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needed for

BRITISH IRISH ASSOCIATION

*Conferences.* Full-time, or part-time with spasms of full-time. Interest in Irish affairs essential. Graduate preferred. Salary negotiable (£2,000+).

Write with qualifications to Nick Stadlen, 9 Poland Street, W1.

**Assistant Secretary (Negotiations)**

required by the

**National Union of Bank Employees.**

The successful applicant (who will be based at Twickenham Middlesex/Esher Surrey) will be required to lead negotiations and advise on trade union organisation in international banks, building societies and financial institutions. For this responsible position previous trade union experience will be an advantage.

Commencing salary £5,088 p.a. plus £200 p.a. London Allowance. Motor car provided. Good holidays and conditions of service.

Applications, giving full details of age, qualifications and previous posts, should be addressed to NUBE, Queens House, 2 Holly Road, Twickenham, TW1 4EL, by 23 January 1976.

**A SECRETARIAL ASSISTANT**

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# Courses

Continued from page 52

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**LADY 50.** Jewish, seeks companionship of good natured male. London area. Box 2727.

**EXETER, DEVON.** Woman (child 5) youthful, attractive wishes to meet interesting, intell. man, 38-50. Tall. Box 2548.

**COMPLETELY UNATTACHED HUMAN,** well more or less, male wishes to meet intelligent & educated lady, 30-40, give or take a bit either way, with view to normal relations & companionship. No progressives or intellectuals please. Box 2359.

**I'M 43,** professionally happy, emotionally unneurotic, financially secure, domestically in need of repair and remarriage. A kind, unpretentious, unencumbered lady age 29-46 hasn't chanced to show up in varied social scene, but NS ad could be more fruitful than the lottery of propinquity. I'd hope a reply might come from someone who's tolerant and self-critical, who has a professional career to advance, who desirably is not devoted to music, religion or cats, and who doesn't mind living in or near London. My interests are mostly job-associated, eg politics, people (particularly the problems of the disadvantaged), buildings, journalism and travel. I tend to be absent-minded and I'm not athletic, but there are compensating bonuses which it would be enjoyable to share. Box 2340.

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★ **Art critics and researchers** in art services living in Greater London: to enable a specific project to be undertaken which, in their present situation, is not feasible.

Students are not eligible for these awards, nor are those in receipt (in 1975/76) of £250 or more from a major funding body.

Applicants will be selected for award by the Association's Visual Arts Panel whose members will speak with as many applicants as possible to ensure that applications are clearly understood and assessed.

*Further information can be obtained from:*
*Caryn Faure Walker*
*Visual Arts Officer*
*Greater London Arts Association*
*25/31 Tavistock Place*
*London WC1H 9SF*

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**NEW STATESMAN**
Vol. 91 No. 2338

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**Poems by John Fuller and Tarjei Vesaas**

# Concert

**WIGMORE HALL.** Sun. 11 Jan. 3 p.m. Varied programme of recent compositions by Alan Bush, presented by WMA in honour of his 75th birthday. Several first performances. Tickets £1.50, £1.10, 75p & 50p at hall.

# Entertainments

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# Theatres

**ALMOST FREE THEATRE.** *Susannah York* in 'The Great Ban' by Mike Wells. Prevs Mon. & Tues. 8.15. Opens Wed. 7, subs eves 8.15. 485 6224.

**CITIZENS' THEATRE, GLASGOW.** Presents Citizens' Theatre Company in De Sade Show 16-23 January. 041-429 0022.

**HAMPSTEAD THEATRE.** 722 9301. 'Cakewalk' by Roy Kist & Company. Prevs 15-18 Jan. Opens 19 Jan. Nightly at 8. First Night at 7. Tickets £1.50, 90p. Students 50p. Until 7 Feb.

**NEW END** (Hampstead Tube) 435 4116. 'Fat Harold and The Last 26' by Alan Bleasdale ends tomorrow 8 p.m. Prev. 15 Jan. 8 p.m. Richard Crane's 'Clownmaker'.

**OLD VIC.** The National Theatre. 928 7616. Prevs Tonight, Mon. & Tues., 7.30. Tomorrow 2.15 & 7.30. Opens Wed. 7 *Thurs. 2.15 & 7.30 'Plunder' by Ben* Travers.

**THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR.** 95 61107. *From 19 Dec. twice daily at 2.30 and* 7.30. 'Dick Whittington'.

**TOWER**, Canonbury Place, N1. British *premiere of Lanford Wilson's off-Broadway* success 'The Hot L Baltimore', 9-11, 14-17 Jan. at 7.30. Booking: 226 5111 (2.15 p.m.-9 p.m., Mons 6.30 p.m.-9 p.m.).

# Exhibitions

**GANYMED GALLERY.** 11 Gt Turnstile, WC1. 405 9836. Satirical prints on Fashion 1780s-1820s by Gillray, Heath, Cruikshank etc. £6-£100.

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# Meetings

**FAMILIES NEED FATHERS** – 'Parental Rights & Obligations'. Public Meeting, Holborn Assembly Hall, London WC1. Sat. 17 Jan. 2.30 p.m. All welcome.

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**
Gower Street, WC1E 6BT
FREE PUBLIC LECTURES,
SPRING TERM 1976

Mons. & Thurs. 12, 15, 19, 22 Jan. at 5.30, Lord Northcliffe Lectures in Literature by Mr L. P. Wilkinson, Classical Approaches to Modern Topics'.
Fri. 23 Jan. at 5.30, Commonwealth Fund Lecture in American History by Professor Michael G. Kammen, 'The American Revolution and the Historical Imagination'.
Thurs. & Tues. 5, 12, 17 Feb. at 5.30, Shearman Memorial Lectures by Professor Hilary Putnam, 'Meaning and Truth'.
Thurs. 19 Feb. at 5.30, Seaton Memorial Lecture by Sir John Pope-Hennessy, 'Andrea della Robbia'.
Mon. 1 March at 5.30, Inaugural Lecture by Professor Lawrence Gowing, 'Temperament, Tradition and the Case of Mr Harris'.
Tues. 2 March at 6.00, Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture by Professor Henry Loyn, 'Scandinavians in Wales in the Viking Age'.

Complete list of public lectures from Publications Office, University College, London, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. (Stamped envelope required.)

**NON-CRIMINALS IN PRISON:**
The problem of maintenance defaulters
PROFESSOR O. R. McGREGOR
of BEDFORD COLLEGE
7 p.m. Thursday, 15 January
at NISW, 5-7 Tavistock Place, WC1.
HOWARD LEAGUE MEETING
Non-members 25p.

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 13 Jan. 'Constable and the Imitative Art' by Professor Lawrence Gowing; 15 Jan. 'Viking Silver' by Mr J. A. Graham-Campbell. Admission free. Details of public lectures from Publications Office (send stamped envelope).

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON:** A course of three lectures entitled: 1. Some aspects of the syntax and semantics of copulative sentences. 2. The grammar of epithets in French: a transformational versus an interpretive approach. 3. Some problems concerning Raising Transformation in French. will be given by Professor N. Ruwet (Paris) on 12, 13, and 14 January, at Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU at 5.30 p.m. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

**THE ARTS/POLITICS**/*Social Debates. New* Forum begins February at established club, Sloane Square, SW1. Bar, restaurant. Everyone is welcome. For information tel. 01-730 1885.

**'INVASION OF WESTERN SAHARA'** – Public Meeting organised by Anti-Slavery Society & Minority Rights Group: 6.30 p.m. Monday 12 Jan., Assembly Room, Central Hall, Westminster, SW1.

**THREE NEW FILMS.** 'Women of the Tou Bou (Chad, Niger, Libya)'; 'The Teda Tribe in Saharan Mountains', 'Co-operation & Development (UN)', *shown by Westminster* UNA, Tues. 13 Jan. 7.15 p.m. St Michael's Hall, Elizabeth St, SW1. All welcome.

**DR HARRY KAY** asks 'Is there enough intelligence to go round?'. The fourth Leverhulme Colloquium. 6 p.m. Thurs. 15 Jan at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle St, London W1. Details from the Council for Science in Society, 3/4 St Andrew's Hill, EC4.

**'95 PER CENT IS CRAP':** *A Plain Man's* Guide to British Politics! Speaker – Terry Arthur (author of book with above title) 8.30 p.m. Thursday 15 January. The Royal Oak, York St, off Baker St, W1. The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

**ABORTION RIGHTS** and Community Care Conference, at Friends' Meeting House, Euston Rd, London NW1. Sat. 17 Jan 1976 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Registration 9.30 a.m or through Abortion Law Reform Association, 88A Islington High St, N1. 359 5200

**SATURDAY** evenings at 52 Clapham High St, SW4 (5 *mins Clapham North Tube)* commence 10 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Open evening and social with films, music etc. All welcome. Admission free. 17 Jan. *The Socialist* Party and Revolution – no Compromise, about ourselves. The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

**'MONCURE CONWAY & ANGLO-**American Relations': Prof. Denis Welland. Sun 11 Jan. 11 a.m. Sunday Forum, 11 Jan 3 p.m. 'The Future of Motherhood and Domestic Work': Sheila Pusinelli. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Is Dr Coggan Right?' *Tues. 13 Jan. 7 p.m. South Place Ethical* Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. 01-242 8032/3.

**BUDDHIST SOCIETY**, 58 *Eccleston Square*, London SW1. Sat. 10 Jan. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 13 Jan. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 14 Jan. 6.30 p.m. Public lecture on Meditation by Sujata. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

**THEOSOPHY.** Public Talk & Questions. Sun 11 Jan. 8 p.m. Free. 'Real Yoga'. S.a.e for programme, book list and literature ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL

**CHARLES MORRIS**
Minister of State for the Civil Service
Subject: 'Civil Servants — are they overvalued?'
**CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY**
**7.30 p.m. 14 January**
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Kensington High Street, London W8.
(Nearest tube station: High Street Kensington.)
In the chair: Dr Elchon Hinden
Tickets may be obtained at the door, or in advance from the Secretary, 22 Kings Gardens NW6 4PU, at 50 pence (incl. tea).
Please **SEND A STAMPED, ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WITH REMITTANCE.**

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